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JFK Jr.:
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NATIONAL REVIEW

Losing Private Ryan

Why the American citizen-soldier is fading away

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

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AUGUST 9, 1999 VOL. LI, NO. 15

ARTICLES

16 A Kennedy Apart *by Peter Collier*
JFK Jr. was his own man.

17 Death of the Prince *by Christopher Buckley*
And a nation's grief.

18 Salt Lake Steeler *by Jay Nordlinger*
Orrin Hatch enters the fray.

22 George W. Clinton? *by John O'Sullivan*
The me-too kids.

24 Taiwan Gets Bold *by Mark P. Lagon*
What the United States should do.

26 Board Games *by Danielle Dunne Wilcox & Chester E. Finn Jr.*
Business backs a losing education strategy.

28 Father of His Country, Only *by Richard Brookhiser*
George Washington faces a bad rap.

29 Royal Is as Royal Does *by Taki Theodoracopulos*
How the Windsors lost their magic.

31 Kweisi & Me *by Rob Long*
Don't hate me 'cause my show is white.

32 Losing Private Ryan *by Andrew J. Bacevich*
Why the citizen-soldier is MIA.

35 The End of the Draft, and More *by Stephen E. Ambrose*
A common identity is lost.

36 Discredited *by Amity Shlaes*
How tax credits block tax cuts.

39 The Court's Mr. Right *by Daniel E. Troy*
Clarence Thomas makes his mark.

Cover: U.S. soldiers posing with a captured Japanese gun at Hollandia, New Guinea (UPI)

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

'Corruption of the Best'—*David Pryce-Jones,* ***page 45***
Out of Place, *by Edward W. Said*

Curtains—*Donald Lyons,* ***page 46***
Broadway Babies Say Goodnight, *by Mark Steyn*

The Editor as Playboy—*Adam Bellow,* ***page 50***
Another Life, *by Michael Korda*

Southern Cross—*Forrest McDonald,* ***page 51***
A Consuming Fire, *by Eugene D. Genovese*

Manners: Illustrated Men—*Andrew Stuttaford visits the New York City Tattoo Convention,* ***page 52***

City Desk: Kind of Famous—*Richard Brookhiser notes that, in Gotham, celebrity comes cheap,* ***page 53***

Film: Not with a Bang . . . —*John Simon on* Eyes Wide Shut, ***page 54***

SECTIONS

2 Letters
4 For the Record
6 The Week
42 Help!
44 Letter from Al
56 Books in Brief
58 On the Right
60 The Misanthrope's Corner

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■ LETTERS ■

GEORGE W.'S LIFE RECORD

Ralph Reed is quick to compare George W. Bush to Ronald Reagan ("Mr. Right," July 12), but the Texas governor is hardly Reaganesque on abortion. Reed says that Bush "supports the pro-life plank in the Republican platform" but fails to mention that the governor qualifies his support for a Human Life Amendment because the public isn't behind it. Bush's equivocating is in stark contrast to the principled position taken by Reagan in his 1980 presidential campaign, who was an unapologetic advocate for a constitutional amendment to ban abortion (including pregnancies caused by rape and incest), despite polling that suggested the public didn't agree.

While Bush has vaguely promised "to do everything in [his] power restrict abortions" (echoes of Clinton's "safe, legal, and rare"?), Reagan repeatedly pledged to outlaw abortion. Although after eight years in office abortion was still the law of the land, Reagan's uncompromising public rhetoric and support for congressional and state measures that serve to restrict abortions had earned him the gratitude, devotion, and votes of the pro-life movement. Thus far Bush hasn't proven himself worthy of that constituency's support, despite the misguided hopes of the likes of Reed, Rep. Chris Smith, and the National Right to Life Committee. Perhaps their hopes for executive power have corrupted their principles absolutely.

David M. Hickey
Alexandria, Va.

As far as comparisons to President Reagan go, I have learned not to compare the incomparable. When it comes to articulating a pro-life stand, Gov. Bush has been unwavering in his support for the current language in the Republican platform, which includes a constitutional amendment to protect innocent human life. He has pledged to appoint strict constructionists to the federal bench and holds Justice Antonin Scalia as his model for Supreme Court nominees. Scalia is one of the most eloquent pro-lifers on the court. Gov. Bush recently signed a parental-notification bill in Texas and promotes abstinence rather than abortion or failed "safe sex" programs as the solution to teen pregnancy. No effort to revise the record can change Gov. Bush's credentials as a pro-life candidate. —RR

SOUR POLICY

Dave Juday leaves a few important facts out of his report on milk policy ("Sour, Curdled, and Gross," July 12). He claims the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact "allows a local commission of farmers and state bureaucrats to set the price that processors must pay farmers for raw milk." But the compact also requires that a consumer representative sit on each board. He suggests that the price is pulled out of thin air, but it is based on the standard price for milk and is adjusted according to local "costs of production"—hardly a new concept. The same sandwich that costs me $3.00 in Tennessee may cost a New Yorker $6.00—is a "sandwich cartel" to blame or is it simply the cost of doing business in the Big Apple?

The proposed southern compact will allow farmers to receive a fair price for their milk based on regional costs of production. Given the uniqueness of the product—it must be processed within 48 hours or destroyed—dairy farmers are deprived of the luxury of holding out for a better price, while large conglomerate milk processors can always truck in milk at lower prices, regardless of local costs. It is a scenario that promises to drive local farmers out of business at the sign of a drought.

Food production is not as simple as producing socks or computers. But as Juday correctly notes, agricultural policy is of the lowest priority in national politics. Naturally then, the compacts aren't the best policies to come out of Washington. But they are an honest attempt to make long-term contingency plans for unforeseen disasters that could potentially harm our food supply.

Michael P. Tarrier
Blaine, Tenn.

The "standard price for milk" is based on a government formula that already accounts for higher costs of production. Compacts are an addition. Mr. Tarrier is correct: Compacts should not be considered cartels just because they exist where milk is more expensive. They are cartels because they artificially raise the price of milk produced at lower costs from more efficient areas of production. And dairy processing is more like "producing socks" than Mr. Tarrier will admit. Socks are produced from wool and cotton, both farm commodities subject to the same vagaries of weather and cyclical markets as dairy. —DJ

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The World *As Israel marks 50 years of statehood, a founder still waits to be invited back home.* 5

Readers' views on the Clinton scandal *A full page of thought-provoking reader mail.* 8

Work&Money *Bear claws or Bull pause? A guide to today's wild and woolly stock market.* 15

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SERB DOUBTS

Living in cross hairs of NATO

by Justin Brown
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One – not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening after seven months of violence down in Kosovo.

Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18. State has most hate groups per capita.

by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO– When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor; first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)?"

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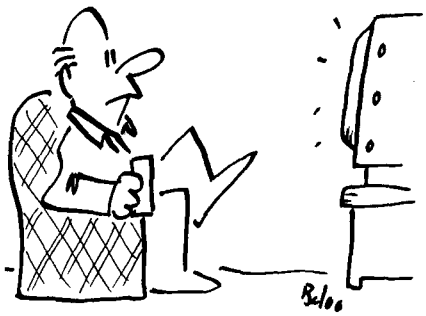
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ "I know I shouldn't do this because it's not really presidential, but I'm going to do it anyway," says President **Clinton** at Democratic Leadership Council event in Baltimore. "This compassionate conservatism has a great ring to it, you know. It sounds so good. And I've really worked hard to try to figure out what it means. I mean, I made an honest effort. And near as I can tell here's what it means—it means: I like you, I do. And I would like to be for the patients' bill of rights and I'd like to be for closing the gun-show loophole, and I'd like not to squander the surplus and save Social Security and Medicare for the next generation. I'd like to raise the minimum wage. I'd like to do these things. But I just can't, and I feel terrible about it." . . . **George W. Bush** says remarks show Clinton sees him as "a threat to his so-called legacy." . . . **Geraldo Rivera**, on Clinton: "He's the first president ever to be comfortable with black people."

■ The *Hotline* surveys state polls on prospective Bush–**Gore** race, finds Bush holding a commanding lead in states collectively worth 167 electoral votes and Gore in front nowhere. . . . Owing to high cost of his fundraising, Gore leads **Bill Bradley** in cash on hand by less than $5 million. . . . Rep. **John Kasich** (R., Ohio) drops out, endorses Bush. . . . **Olympia Dukakis**, actress and cousin of 1988 Democratic nominee **Michael Dukakis**, endorses Bradley. . . . New Mexico governor **Gary Johnson** endorses **Steve Forbes**. . . . Four biographies of Bush in works, all due by February. Authors are *Dallas Morning News* reporter **Bill Minutaglio**, former *George* editor **Elizabeth Mitchell**, Texas journalist **J. H. Hatfield**, and columnist **Molly Ivins**. . . . **Hillary Clinton** says she'll need $25 million for New York race. . . . From fundraising letter signed by Sen. **Robert Torricelli** (D., N.J.): "Ever feel like politicians in Washington, D.C., don't care what people in Beverly Hills, California, think?"

■ Sen. **Bob Smith**'s exit from GOP prompts speculation about 2002 N.H. Senate race, with Rep. **John E. Sununu**, considered to be early frontrunner. . . . After Sen. John Warner (R., Va.) crosses aisle to support Sen. **Charles S. Robb** (D., Va.) on two high-profile votes, some observers wonder if Warner wants former governor George Allen to beat Robb in 2000—or wants to remain only Republican senator from area. . . . Kentucky state Sen. **Dan Seum** switches to GOP, giving Republicans tie in chamber. . . . Colorado secretary of state Vikki Buckley, highest-ranking black Republican state officeholder in nation, dies of heart disease. . . . Rep. **George Brown** (D., Calif.), oldest member of House at 79, dies. GOP considers seat winnable. . . . Mayo Clinic doctor visits **Reagan** family, addresses condition of former president: "He is really comfortable and doing well in his environment. The president is doing as well as he can given the situation of this particular disease." . . . Following phone calls by **Nancy Reagan**, California approves special Reagan license plate.



"And now, a brief comment by our network's token Republican. . . "

■ Sen. **Kay Bailey Hutchison** (R., Tex.), speaking at Heritage Foundation on Kosovo: "We declared victory when 19 nations outlasted a country the size of the state of Kentucky, with a faltering economy and minimal military resources. . . . An elephant was called in to step on a gnat—the gnat is wounded and the elephant is limping." . . . Western Wats poll: 53 percent rate 1994 Republican takeover of Congress a "good thing," only 37 percent call it a "bad thing." . . . *Los Angeles Times* labels House vote to give itself 3.4 percent pay raise, retroactive to January, "an unusual burst of bipartisan cooperation." Measure also doubles presidential salary, after next oath of office. . . .Consumer Price Index doesn't rise in May or June, meaning inflation rate is zero.

■ Texas judge orders new election for 1997 Houston ballot initiative outlawing racial preferences, following city council meddling that supporters say led to defeat. . . . NR contributor **Robert P. George** named McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, chair once held by **Woodrow Wilson**. . . . Utah school district apologizes for religious content of Earth Day event that included American Indian prayers and Episcopal bishop's blessing of trees. . . . Air Force spends $268,000 in funds usually reserved for military readiness to renovate kitchen in home used by Air Force Academy superintendent. . . . Media mogul and part-time environmental activist **Ted Turner** permits oil drilling on New Mexico ranch property.

■ Argentine and British governments agree to lift air embargo between Argentina and Falkland Islands, imposed after 1982 war. . . . Lebanon and Libya revoke landing rights of Bulgaria's Balkan Air at airports, with Iran, Dubai, and Tunisia considering same, after sale of Bulgarian carrier to Israeli consortium. . . . Mexican Senate blocks bill extending voting rights to Mexicans living in United States and their American-born children. . . . Papua New Guinea infuriates China and upsets neighbor Australia by establishing diplomatic ties to Taiwan. . . . Russian Statistics Agency reports continuing population decline, owing mainly to worsening poverty, rampant alcoholism, poor nutrition, and declining health care. . . . **Boris Yeltsin** says body of **Lenin** will eventually be moved from Red Square mausoleum and buried because "it isn't Christian-like behavior to keep the body of a long-dead person on public display." . . . Poland arrests three army colonels on charges of spying for Russia. . . . U.N. demographers say world's 6 billionth person will be born October 12. . . . New Zealand declares "ordinary stockings are not tax-deductible but patterned stockings used for work" by prostitutes are.

■ House Republican whip **Tom DeLay**, dubbed "the Hammer" by critics, says, "I'm the Compassionate Hammer." **NR**

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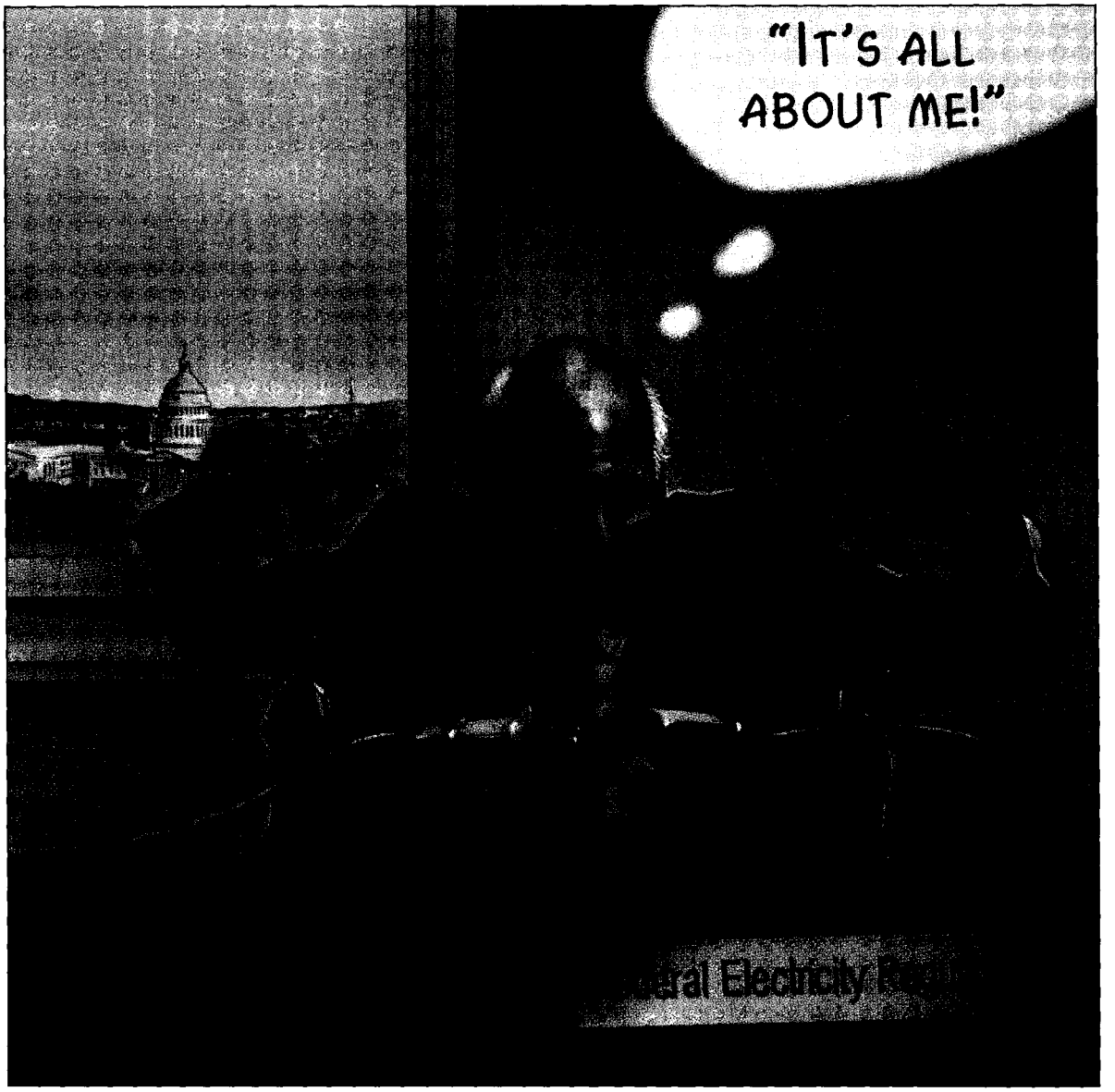
ELECTRICITY — WHO'LL PULL THE STRINGS?

MEET THE REGULATOR



A little-known and often unaccountable federal regulatory agency — the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) — has grandiose plans for itself. We should all be alarmed. More troubling, some members of Congress are active accomplices in this unprecedented regulatory power grab.

The blueprint for FERC's dream of empire is a 300 page proposed rule. It's been a very long time since Washington has seen regulatory empire building this brazen.

The proposed FERC rule makes good on a once fantastic boast — pronounced by then-FERC Commissioner Betsy Moler — that FERC has the authority to regulate electricity "to the toaster."

Aiding and abetting the FERC power grab are certain members of Congress who would grant FERC an array of added powers, if that's possible. For example, the just-introduced Markey-Largent omnibus bill grants FERC additional authority to fix charges, rates and terms of local electricity distribution service.

It's time for Congress to clip FERC's regulatory ambitions and turn back legislation that would only embolden the already zealous federal electricity regulators.

Unleashing a torrent of federal regulation in the name of "deregulation" dishonors the goals of consumer choice and market competition.

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THE WEEK

■ Okay, they've bought our presidency, stolen our nuclear secrets, and menaced Taiwan—but they can't beat our women's soccer team. Rah.

■ Is George W. Bush starting to take conservative support for granted? Three recent signs point that way. First his spokeswoman, Karen Hughes, waffled on the minimum wage. Then the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Bush would cut taxes only after funding Social Security, Medicare, and the military. "If there is any money left over, it ought to be returned to the people," said Bush, in a formulation indistinguishable from President Clinton's. And in Iowa, Bush called for "disaster relief" for farmers, the disaster being low prices. (To be fair, he also sensibly urged free trade in agriculture as a longer-term solution for farmers' difficulties.) We do hope W. isn't going to start standing for "wobbly."

■ Bill Archer and William Roth, the chairmen of the House and Senate tax-writing committees, have introduced important tax-cut bills. Archer's plan is bolder in cutting income taxes and capital-gains taxes. Both bills, however, tackle the marriage penalty and the estate tax. And Roth's bill is the bolder when it comes to tax cuts for savings and investment. Either bill would reduce federal revenue by an estimated $800 billion over ten years. President Clinton says this is reckless. A liberal think tank warns that Archer's bill would reduce revenues by $3 trillion in the second decade after passage and warns us to think of the long run. But as conservative economist Bruce Bartlett points out, this is silly: Projections that far ahead are meaningless, and Congress could always raise taxes later if it had to. Besides, the same projections show that GDP over that second decade will be $173 trillion. Republicans should combine the best features of both bills. Send the tax cuts to President Clinton, and the money out of Washington.

■ Rep. Michael Forbes, of eastern Long Island, left the GOP for the Democratic party. His walk was hardly a matter of principle. Forbes first won his seat as an opponent of abortion and gun control and a supporter of the Contract with America. He was shunned by the leadership after voting in 1997 to oust Newt Gingrich as Speaker on ethics charges. Bob Livingston, who successfully campaigned to succeed Newt, promised to give Forbes power and clout, but when Livingston resigned from Congress after a sex scandal, Forbes was alone again. Forbes, who voted to impeach Bill Clinton and has endorsed George W. Bush, will make an odd Democrat. But we should not dismiss his switch lightly. The GOP has successfully wooed Democratic congressmen since the Eighties, especially after 1994. Forbes is the first congressman to move the other way in decades. Even a weak reed can be a straw in the wind.

■ Hillary Clinton is settling in nicely to the political culture of her new state, thank you. Since announcing she is a Yankees fan, she has described Jerusalem (formulaically) as the "eternal and indivisible capital of Israel" (this, after calling for Palestinian statehood last year); and said Congress should let New York join a milk cartel that protects dairy farmers in the states that belong to it, at the cost of boosting the price of their milk by 50 cents a gallon. A few appearances with IRA plastique suppliers, and a robust defense of rent control in New York City, and she will be indistinguishable from any homegrown pol.

■ The abortion drug RU-486 appears ready to become widely available in America later this year. Margaret Talbot, writing in *The New York Times Magazine*, hails this development and its potential to "reconfigure the politics and perception of abortion," perhaps even offering a "peace treaty" in the abortion wars. The pill, which chemically triggers an often painful miscarriage, could indeed encourage more first-trimester abortions and eliminate the stigma on abortionists. Under these circumstances, no doubt many Americans would be attracted to the policy prevalent in Europe: approval and even public funding of first-trimester abortions, but restrictions on those occurring later in pregnancy. Most Americans believe that earlier abortions are better than later ones. But moral intuition must yield to moral reasoning, which tells us that the embryo is a genetically distinct individual life from the moment of conception—and not just when it starts to look like an infant on an ultrasound screen. Killing is killing, whether early or late, at home or in an office. And abortion is a moral wrong that no technology can right.

■ Bill Bradley came out for an array of gun controls, including mandatory registration of all handguns, and Al Gore responded with a weaker licensing proposal. Neither man is on the right track. Background checks have not yielded much benefit to date, and criminals would surely find ways to evade a more extensive system. Both candidates favor a ban on cheap guns—the main effect of which would be to make self-defense harder for the law-abiding poor in high-crime areas. These proposals suggest that the competition for primary votes is leading

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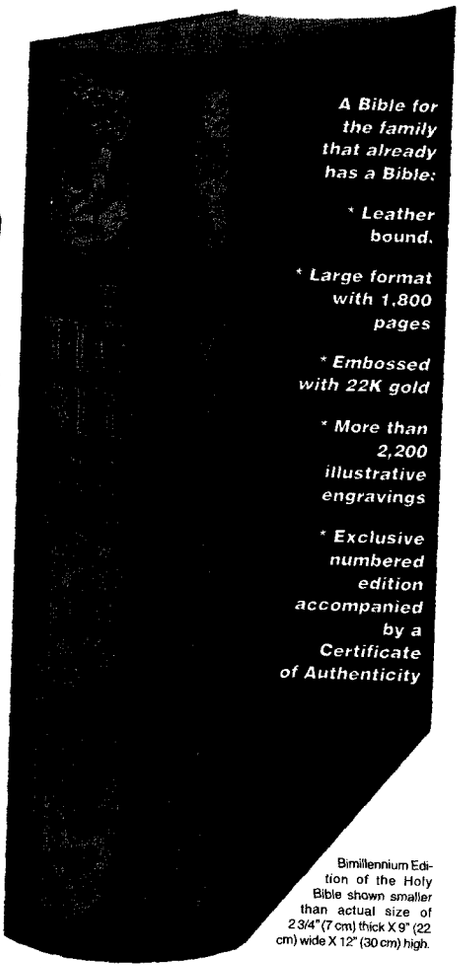
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The First Shakeout

Kasich, sucking air, withdrew.
Smith is playing peekaboo
As an independent, while
Weicker, like a crocodile
Under water as its eyes
Bulge above, exciting cries,
Scared the pants off Donald Trump.
No one's seen him on the stump.

—W. H. von Dreele

Democrats to overplay their hand. Yes, many of the ideas appeal to the public, but the people who vote on gun issues are heavily opposed. On some issues, moreover, Gore has staked out a position that lacks even superficial appeal: A large majority of the public opposes the lawsuits against gun manufacturers that he is defending. Republicans will lose on this issue only if they take the media bait and abandon their natural allies—which, sorry to say, is always a possibility.

■ Yet another gun lawsuit, this one filed by the NAACP, makes it abundantly clear that such litigation is aimed at imposing new policies rather than obtaining justice. Instead of arguing that gun makers should pay for the costs associated with the criminal use of their products, as a growing number of cities are demanding, the NAACP is seeking an injunction requiring specific changes in the way firearms are distributed. The organization wants to end sales at gun shows, require that all guns be sold with safety locks, limit customers to one purchase a month, and make it harder to become a federally licensed distributor. Its wish list does not include abolition of the legislative branch, but that's implicit in the whole endeavor.

■ The Boston School Committee voted to end busing as a remedy for segregation. In 1974, W. Arthur Garrity Jr., a federal judge, took control of the city's schools and sent children from Irish Catholic South Boston and black Roxbury into the other neighborhood, and into a cauldron of tension and strife. The helpless lower-class parents involved, black and white, were almost all Democrats, and beneficiaries of the welfare state. The state's suburban and privately schooled elite decided to move poorer students about like beads on an abacus of racial computation. If the kids involved in this experiment managed to learn anything, it was only how stubborn and how reckless their elders could be.

■ Who says liberals are against blacklists? The Clinton administration, keeping a promise Al Gore made to the AFL-CIO two years ago, wants to deny federal contracts to companies that may have broken the law, even if the charge has not been proven. The unions say this policy is necessary to deal with chronic lawbreakers such as Avondale Shipyard in Louisiana—which, inconveniently, has just been found by a federal appeals court to be innocent of the principal charge against it. The potential for extortion is obvious: A union would merely have to threaten to file a charge against a company to force it to meet union demands. This is a policy more reminiscent of a Third World bureaucratic shakedown than of the Third Way the administration talks about. At least now we know what Al Gore meant by "reinventing government."

■ Proving that no facet of American life is exempt from racial politics, the Commerce Department released a study showing that between 1997 and 1998 the number of whites using the Internet grew faster than the number of blacks and Hispanics. President Clinton, during his "poverty tour," took note of the findings and bemoaned a "digital divide." The NAACP's Kweisi Mfume then charged that children "are being subtracted out of the equation by a technological separation of the races." Al Gore called for an "all-out national crusade to close the digital divide," proposing to double government high-tech investment, increase computer education, and put computer terminals in stores so that people can surf the web while they shop. Uncommented on were the report's discoveries that Asians use computers more than anyone else and that computer use by blacks and Hispanics has doubled in the last four years, with Internet access up 50 percent among them in the last year alone. The trend shows every sign of continuing. So patience, everyone.

■ David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, has been willing to take Sinn Fein/IRA into power-sharing arrangements in Northern Ireland, but on one condition: The IRA must first "decommission" their weapons in some verifiable process. Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness always liked to argue that they were genuine politicians, quite distinct from the men of violence in the IRA. Much as they might wish to, they were powerless to persuade the IRA to disarm; the gunmen had simply to be taken on trust. Under intense pressure, Trimble looked as if he were about to give way and form a government in the province to include Sinn Fein/IRA. But at the eleventh hour, a leaked internal IRA document made it unmistakably clear that Sinn Fein and the IRA are, indeed, one and the same—Adams and McGuinness had been talking out of both sides of their mouths. Trimble answered with No—and that has quite properly prevented armed men from covertly entering a parliamentary process they are dedicated to destroying.

■ An update on Patrick Magee, the "Brighton bomber," who almost succeeded in killing Mrs. Thatcher, did kill or maim several others, and was released from prison early by Prime Minister Tony Blair: Magee's fellow terrorists can rest assured that 14 years in prison did nothing to soften their man. He has regained his liberty as part of the process aiming to bring

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peace to Ulster. If, in the end, Gerry Adams and his IRA decide to lay down their arms, they will have Magee to contend with. "The Brits understand only bombs," he declares. Reporters who call at his home find him in a furious mood: "I'll finish the job," he promises, "whatever Adams says." If the IRA opted for peace, he "would knock off the traitors one by one" and "see to" Gerry Adams. Lovely.

■ A whiff of revolution has returned to Iran. Students took to the streets of Teheran in early July to protest a restrictive press law and the closing of a newspaper critical of the clerical regime. The demonstrations were broken up by police and their rock-throwing allies. The protests then spread to a half-dozen other cities, with hundreds injured, many dead. These students are the Establishment's children. Leading officials have deplored the police action, and even the hardline "Supreme Leader," Ayatollah Khamenei, has expressed regret. The reformist President Khatami may prove to be Iran's Gorbachev—the leader whose partial moderation of his regime's brutality brings on a revolution. What the people of Iran deserve is not just a benign form of the present regime, but an end to it. The Clinton administration, which seeks a rapprochement with Teheran, should instead continue to apply the pressure until this hateful government—and its baleful influence in the Middle East—goes the way of Gorbachev's empire.

■ Nobody has yet been brought to trial in Russia for his part in the practice of Communist terror. Such was Communism, the apologetic argument runs, that one and all were simultaneously victims and victimizers; therefore, there is no such thing as responsibility. Well, an excellent place to start separating the guilty from the innocent is *Gulag*, a documentary made by Angus Macqueen for the BBC. It bears comparison with Claude Lanzmann's film on the Holocaust, *Shoah*. Where Nazism is concerned, though, victims are easily distinguished from victimizers. Even now, almost 60 years on, there are still trials of Nazi criminals. *Gulag*, which, given the vastness of its subject, has to be selective, concentrates on the processes whereby the innocent were arrested and deported as slave laborers. In dozens of interviews, victims from different backgrounds describe lives wrecked for no purpose. Most remarkably, the many KGB officers and camp guards, the drivers and railwaymen, express not one single word of remorse for their inhumanity. They should be receiving court orders, not pensions.

■ In a letter to the *New York Times Book Review*, Ring Lardner Jr., son of the famous writer, contended that American Communism had nothing to do with spying. Said Lardner, "Certainly all the Communists I knew were patriotic Americans who thought the idea that all men (and women) are created equal would be more fully expressed under socialism than capitalism." Oh? Truth is, the Party was never interested in equal rights of any kind, and especially not for women. The Venona material, on top of mountains of other evidence, shows that plenty of Party members were spies. And the American patriots in the Party followed every contradictory "dialectical" twist in the Party line as handed down from Moscow through the Communist International. American Communists were indeed loyal—to the Kremlin.

■ A recent report from Joseph Califano's Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) likens pot smoking to Russian roulette. But of course marijuana does not kill one out of every six people who try it. No one has ever died of a marijuana overdose, and only very heavy users are prone to respiratory illness, the most serious health hazard associated with cannabis. The best that CASA can do is trot out its old estimate that "12-to-17-year-olds who smoke marijuana are 85 times more likely to use cocaine than those who do not." This correlation could mean that marijuana somehow primes the brain for cocaine use, transforming pot smokers into crackheads. Or it could mean that the sort of people who like pot are more inclined than those who don't to experiment with other illegal drugs, in the same way that people who like Vivaldi are more inclined than those who don't to experiment with other Baroque composers. Guess which explanation CASA prefers?

■ Among the enduring images of the Apollo 11 moon landing, 30 silvery years ago, is the astronauts, after the rhetoric of small steps and great leaps, bouncing in their bulky suits on the low-gravity lunar surface. Bouncing—what anyone would do; what any child would do. The memory reminds us that, for all the science and the expense, for all the Cold War overtones, for all the courage (no one was sure they would land in one piece, much less get back)—the race to the moon was also a lark. As is any great adventure.

■ They talk of a "Kennedy curse," but there is no curse: This is a superstition, to be discouraged. Even so, the Kennedys have had to bear an inordinate and cruel amount of pain. John F. Kennedy Jr. was a most appealing person—gracious, composed, and life-loving. The only son of possibly the most revered president since Lincoln, he knew a kind of pressure

Bush Envy

Tell me not in mournful numbers
No one's coughing up for Gore,
Or that Bradley pinches pennies
Sweating over semaphore.
Life is real, life is earnest;
Reno never heard the squawks
When the Chinese bankrolled Clinton.
Cash, as Croesus noted, talks.

—W. H. von Dreele

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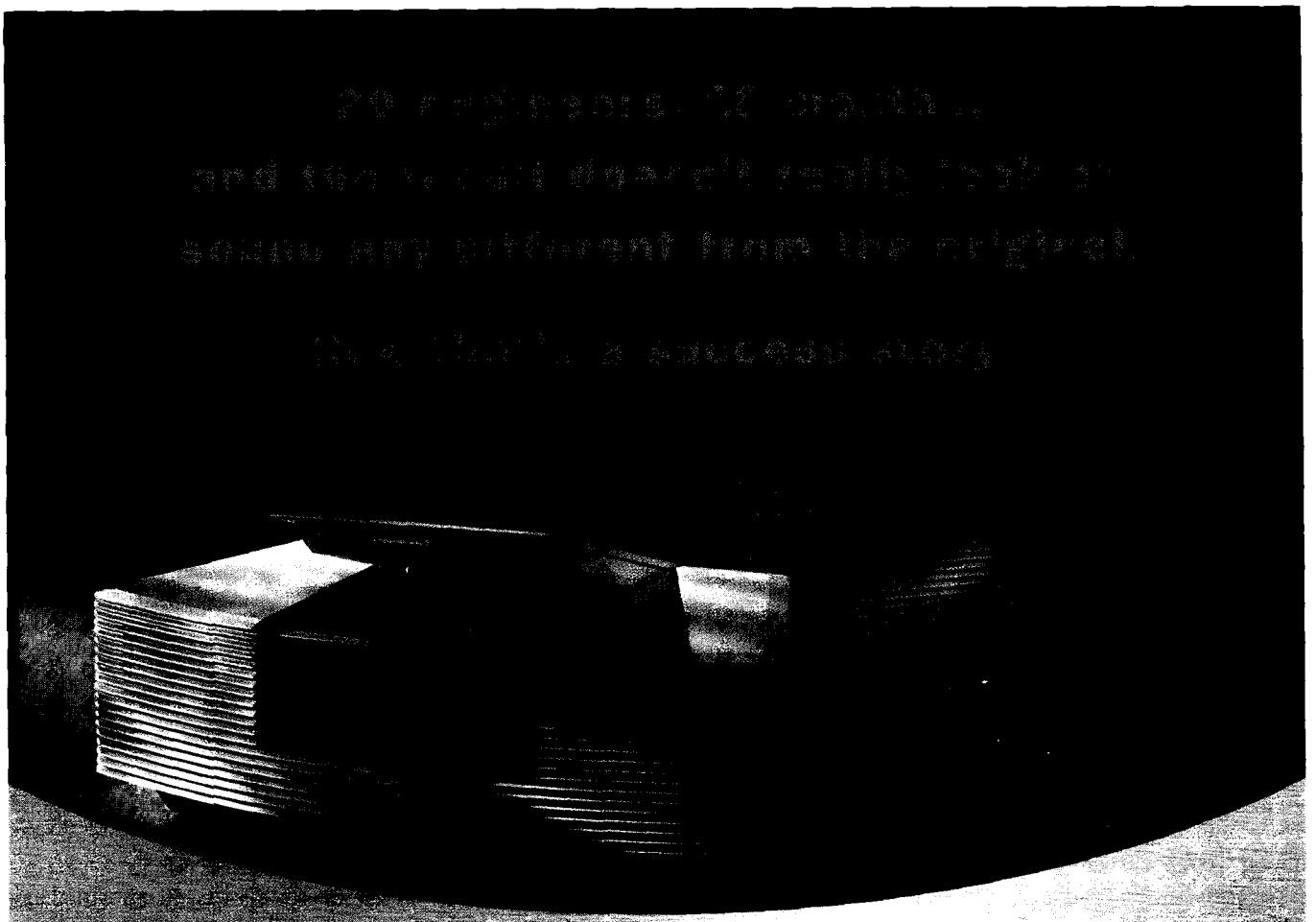

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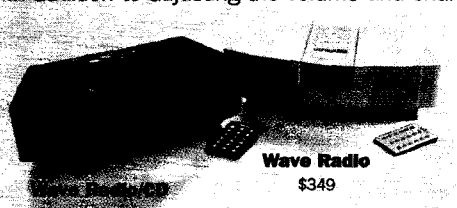

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that few will ever feel. And he acquitted himself well. Most admirably, he was, by every account, a kind man. And now a horrifying thing has happened to him, and to his wife, and to her sister. We, with the rest of the country, are aggrieved.

POLITICS

The Quitter

SEN. BOB SMITH ended his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, and word is that he will seek the White House at the helm of Howard Phillips's U.S. Taxpayers Party (soon to be renamed the American Constitution Party). If Smith's withdrawal did not cause a scramble for his supporters, that was because there were so few of them. Smith polled less than 2 percent in New Hampshire, which he has served in Congress for 15 years. The reasons are not far to seek. Though he can be feisty and good-humored, Smith is not riveting. Portraying himself as a spokesman for conservative principle, he is in fact attracted to marginal positions. For example, his curtain-call speech in the Senate attacked NAFTA and GATT, territory that had already been staked out by Pat Buchanan.

Yet Smith's defection is important as a symptom of unease among some conservatives. Recent victories under the Republican banner have amounted to little; maybe future ones will amount to no more. The Gingrich Revolution lasted less than a year, from the 1994 election to the 1995 budget deadlock; and who knows what a second Bush presidency would amount to?

Smith blamed the GOP's torpor on an "entrenched political industry" of pollsters and campaign consultants, who pull the party in the direction of safe and uncontroversial positions. This is an argument beloved of populists, and it has a certain plausibility. Professionals are primarily interested in winning, and since most people are timid, most pros will counsel caution. But some consultants (like Lee Atwater) know that divisive issues win elections; and whatever the professionals recommend, the decision is up to their employers. Every candidate or party ultimately gets the kind of campaign it deserves.

The way to pull politicians in a desirable direction is the same way to pull voters: by offering more compelling arguments in the political arena. Third parties—Free Soil, Prohibition, Socialist—have historically played a role in floating issues. But implementing them as policies requires a winning coalition commanded by a major party. In the 1970s, the Republican party was committed to détente and a realpolitik strategy of managing a declining American position. In his 1976 and '80 campaigns, one losing, one winning, Ronald Reagan led the GOP, the electorate, and ultimately the Free World, to victory. He did not do it by running on a third party, despite many and strong suggestions that he do so.

Buoyed by money and polls, George W. Bush looks unstoppable. If he still has a lot to learn, the main forum he will learn it in is the Republican nomination contest, which Sen. Smith wrongly urges conservatives to join him in abandoning.

TAIWAN

Strait Talk

MAYBE President Clinton is right, and Washington and Beijing are "strategic partners" after all. They had the same reactions when Lee Teng-hui, the president of Taiwan, suggested that Taiwan was a country: fury and dismay. The U.S. and China had different reasons for disapproving. The Chinese regime, which lays claim to Taiwan, is displeased at the assertion of independence. The Clinton administration is alarmed that Taiwan is provoking a crisis with China, a crisis that could lead to deteriorating relations, or worse, between China and the United States. The administration knows that, at the very least, Lee's statement will make it harder to maintain its "one China" policy.

For years, American administrations had been able to agree with Beijing that there is only one China because Taiwan, asserting an improbable dominion over the mainland, said so too. But Taiwan dropped its claim to China in 1991, and Lee says that, since then, "cross-Strait relations have been classified as country-to-country, or at least a special state-to-state relation." So, he says, he is merely restating existing policy (and not suddenly announcing independence for domestic political reasons, as widely charged).

The fact is that Taiwan *is* a state, enjoying an embattled independence. And since it is our ally, in fact if not in name, America has to defend that independence. When Beijing fired missiles in the Taiwan Strait in 1996, President Clinton dispatched two aircraft carriers there. But even if the administration is prepared to act, it speaks too softly.

It says that it opposes any attempt to resolve the issue by force. It has yet to say forthrightly—as it should—that we will come to Taiwan's aid if the island is attacked. Dispelling any doubt will make it less likely that we will ever have to do so. Irresolution, by contrast, will embolden China and alarm Taiwan. Lee might not have made his recent statement if Clinton had not, while in China last year, taken Beijing's line on Taiwan more explicitly than any president had done before.

One day, mainland China may become a free country with which Taiwan could peacefully reunite. American policy should in the meantime make it clear that Taiwan is here, and here to stay.

EUROPE

Losing Currency

AMID much self-congratulation and champagne at the start of this year, the finance ministers of that new bloc, Euroland, launched the euro, the currency supposed to cement member-states and be both the instrument and symbol of eventual federation. That January day, the market valued one euro at $1.18.

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Since then, the euro has fallen about 15 percent, almost to parity with the dollar, and many expect that it will soon sink below that. The European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt manages the euro and, under its pressure, the national central banks that dutifully converted reserves of sound old deutschmarks into euros are nursing losses.

In a leaked report, the bank warned that national governments were running budget deficits that were fatally undermining the euro; and in a second report, it announced that the printing presses were rolling, with 13 billion euro banknotes soon to be ready. National currencies—to which the euro is already pegged—are due to be phased out in 2002, when the new notes take over exclusively.

Critics have long pointed out that monetary union has insurmountable structural faults. One of these is the assumption that a single monetary policy is suitable for the diverse economies of eleven countries. And although the ECB may manage monetary policy, each national government remains responsible for its own budget and taxation. There is a complete severance of powers here. Differences in resources, law, and population mean that some more integrated arrangement is unimaginable, politically or psychologically, unless great violence is done.

Recently, the Italian government decided to spend more money on welfare. The German and French governments huffed and puffed at this little local bending of the rules, which drove the euro down. Here the Italians were up to their familiar trick of borrowing huge sums in order to indulge themselves, but this time at the very low rate of interest set by the ECB.

The German government is in a fix. As the largest European economy, it has to bear many of the costs of the falling euro. Tempers rise as the euro sinks. To many Germans, monetary union and the euro mean only devaluation of the currency and loss of savings, with the suspicion now that untrustworthy Latins are taking advantage of them. In the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic, they needed wheelbarrows to carry the money to the shops. Those 13 billion notes straight off the press remind Europe of the point where its history took an ugly turn downward.

PUBLIC POLICY

Healthy and Wise

MILLIONS of medical decisions are made in America every year. A lot of these decisions will inevitably be mistaken, and some of these mistakes will result in tragedy. The existence of horror stories, then, should not be used to indict a health-care system or allowed to drive public policy. Yet horror stories about HMOs, not all of them true, have dominated the debate over the patient's bill of rights. (This was doubly foolish since the bill would cover all types of insurance plans, not just managed care.)

The Republicans felt it necessary to offer their own version of the bill and argue with Democrats over the details. The most important difference was that Democrats, backed by a rare alliance of doctors and trial lawyers, wanted to expose federally regulated insurance plans to lawsuits. Republicans preferred to create independent review boards to referee disputes. The cost of litigation was the biggest reason the Democratic bill, sponsored by Ted Kennedy, would have jacked up premiums. Kennedy said it would raise monthly premiums by no more than the price of a Big Mac—an estimate that ignored the premium increase for employers, a cost that would come directly out of wages. A study commissioned by the AFL-CIO suggested that the higher price would cause 1.8 million Americans to drop or lose their coverage.

The Senate's rejection of the Democrats' bill must therefore be counted as a minor victory. After several recent missteps, particularly on gun control, the Republicans showed that they are capable of resisting the Democrats on their signature issues. In the end, they held all but two Republicans. Their victory was limited, however, since it was achieved by passing a Republican bill with its own unwise regulations—which Clinton has pledged to veto for all the wrong reasons.

So new regulations appear to have been blocked. But if they do no more, Republicans will have to fight this battle again and again. Federal policy currently encourages employers to pay for workers' health insurance but then call in managed care to hold down the costs that this arrangement would otherwise cause to explode. It is an unsatisfactory solution because it takes control of health-care decisions away from patients and doctors. So the demands for government regulation will continue until the link between employment and health insurance is loosened, and individual ownership of health policies promoted. The Republican bill would in fact encourage such ownership by expanding and lifting restrictions on medical savings accounts. The idea is to let individuals pay out-of-pocket expenses and buy high-deductible insurance policies tax free. Republicans need to make such free-market reforms a higher priority—if not for the public health, then for their own.

CULTURE WATCH

World Cup-cakes

AMERICA wins a world championship: What could be wrong with that?

No sooner had the Americans won the Women's World Cup in soccer than team members and organizers turned the victory into a commercial for Title IX. "Title IX surely opened the door for myself and my teammates," said player Brandi Chastain, while Donna de Varona of the organizing committee said the victory "just wouldn't have happened" without it. As passed by Congress in 1972, Title IX banned sex discrimination in federally funded education programs. But as fleshed out by regulations and bureaucrats, Title IX forces college athletic programs

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to achieve parity in the numbers of men's and women's teams and athletes. Since women tend not to be as interested in sports as men, this can be achieved only by dumping men's teams. A GAO report to Speaker (and former wrestling coach) Dennis Hastert examined 725 schools in the NCAA, and found that the number of male athletes had fallen by 12 percent from 1985 to 1997, while the number of male teams declined by 3 percent. Female athletes and teams rose by 16 and 17 percent over the same period. In classic feminist style, Title IX attempts to help women by hurting men, and by ignoring what both sexes want—in this case, what they want from college athletic programs.

Why the focus on soccer, just now? Two cultural prejudices intersect. The greatest soccer nations in the world are in Latin America, where sex roles keep women out of the sport. Hence, the United States was competing in a diminished field. Soccer, meanwhile, becomes an American sport at the same rate that America loses its sense of distinctness. Soccer spread over the world as a reflection of British imperial greatness and gentlemanly prestige. Now it is the sport of the Third World and Europe (and English hooligans). Soccer is the metric system of sports, multiculturalism on the hoof. Perhaps not coincidentally, it is a sport in serious need of reform: The defense-heavy game leads to absurd penalty-kick tiebreakers.

If you take your daughter out to the ball game, don't forget the games we already have, and don't forget your son.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Jeff [Hart]

Congratulations on the good notice Lance Morrow gives *The Redhunter* in *Time* magazine.

I wonder if I couldn't make a lot of money by starting up a bogus or Potemkin Communist Party.

This would appeal to many who continue to love the defunct Communist Party, like Ellen Schrecker, Victor Navasky, E. L. Doctorow, Eric Foner, etc.

The Potemkin party would hold cell meetings and discuss the finer points of dialectical materialism, would plot strikes and demonstrations, ponder international strategy, sign manifestoes and letters to the editor, march on May Day. Deviationists like Herbert Marcuse and Tom Hayden would naturally be denounced.

Of course, the planned strikes and so on would not occur. But there could be an annual chess tournament in Union Square, and boat trips, dances, etc. *Waiting for Lefty* would be revived on Broadway, and Alec Baldwin and his friends could rise to yell "Strike! Strike!" at the end of the play. We could also recreate the social infrastructure: a Little Red Schoolhouse for the kids, summer camp in the Catskills, athletic contests, Lenin Prizes, and Bokhara rugs. The "Pardon the Rosenbergs" campaign would be socko, led by Tony Hiss and the now-aging Rosenberg children.

Nothing would happen in the "real world," but it would be much like the old days.

Jeff: It's a *terrific* idea. Just don't *tell* anyone!

Best, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: With all due respect . . .

You have been mentioned as a member of the Bilderberg Group and the Council on Foreign Relations. Given your expressed conservatism and Christianity, doesn't such involvement make you a fraud? Such is why many knowledgeable conservatives like myself are saying to hell with it all.

As you are in the twilight of your life, and as we appear to be on the verge of enormous change, what say you, sir?

Tom Drake
Moscow, Pa.

Dear Mr. Drake: What do you have (please don't send me silly books) against Bilderberg? I've been there a couple of times. They're on the whole liberal. Everybody is liberal. The views one hears there (or at CFR meetings) aren't any different from those one hears everywhere—Harvard, *NY Times*, *Los Angeles Times* . . . everywhere except NATIONAL REVIEW.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: We live in this retirement village, where we have a daily trivia game. Our problem: Two words end in *gry*: hungry and angry. We can find no more! Can the "Prince of the Bon Mot" help us?

Gratefully,
Mary Wiltrakis
Kansas City, Mo.

Dear Ms. Wiltrakis: The Prince is forlorn in the matter but can't come up with anything. I'm sure there's software out there that would permit you to look into the dictionary feeding it last letters of a word. But I don't have such software. Maybe a reader will be kind enough to advise me, in which case I'll look for every *-gry* in the book and send it along.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: The only thing that could have topped the stupidity of your little crying tantrum about the American Airlines pilot sick-out would have been to have made, in the process, a technical error. You managed that. It is not the Allied Pilots Association, but rather the Airline Pilots Association.

E. C. Cleveland
Petaluma, Calif.

Dear Mr. Cleveland: I may have cried, but I didn't call in sick.
Cordially,

—WFB

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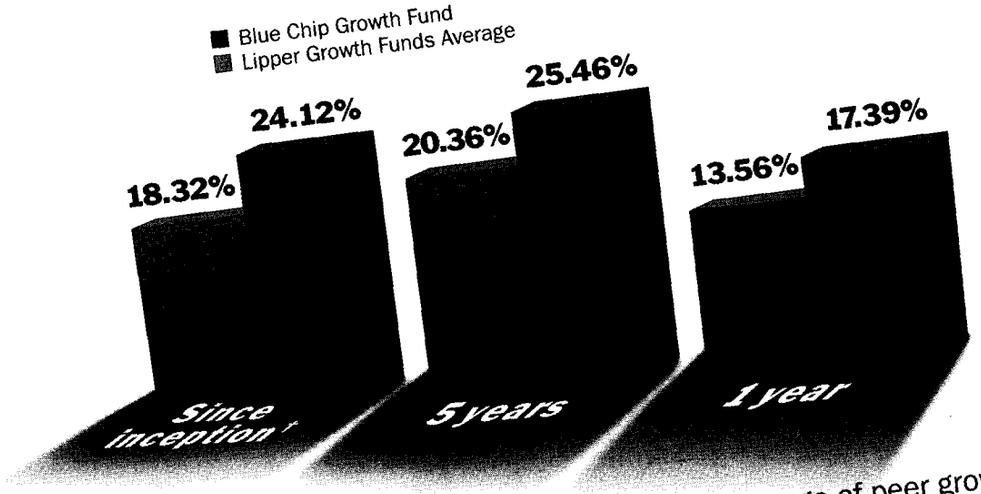

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■ THE NATION ■

A Kennedy Apart

JFK Jr. was his own man.

PETER COLLIER

ONCE again the endless stream of images of the family—windswept, winsome, so extraordinary in appearance. Once more the summoning of all the old ghosts—Joe Jr., the doomed aviator; Kick, who also died by air; JFK in the motorcade in Dallas; RFK making the last speech in Los Angeles; and finally, in sad parodies of the tragic eloquence of these deaths, the silly recklessness of David and Michael and now the handsome young man with his mother's air of mystery, who fell out of the sky on his way to a wedding.

In some ways, John Jr., born at the family's high-water mark, was the most Kennedy of them all—America's Child from the moment his father smuggled the photographer into the Oval Office, and America's Orphan from the moment his mother got him to salute the coffin pulled by the riderless horse. Yet among his relatives, John Jr. was a stranger, an un-Kennedy with a threatening power he had not yet fully possessed to show what a soulless machine the Kennedys have become.

There was always a façade of solidarity, but from the beginning he was the family's exotic. His early experiences resembled those of a hemophiliac prince growing up in protective isolation, particularly in comparison with his cousins' struggles for primacy in the rough-and-tumble of the Compound. Standing at their fence offering to sell "Kennedy sand" to passersby for a dollar a bag, they grew up in a sort of boot camp in which they learned how to mock those who worshipped them. They knew from the outset *what* they were, if not who—executives in training for the family business.

By contrast, John Jr. was a Kennedy without an agenda, discovering himself as he went along. The loss he had suffered was no greater than that of his RFK cousins, but he did not mend so quickly. In the sequestered apartment in New York, he tried to make Secret Service men into surrogate fathers, and he shyly asked his mother's friends if they wanted to hear his "real father," then took them to his room to listen to records of JFK's speeches.

JFK Jr. by Roman Genn

After Bobby's death, Jackie, saying that she feared America had declared "open season on Kennedys," took her children and left. In their irritation over her decision to become a modern Cleopatra using the world as her Nile, her countrymen missed one of the crucial factors in her decision: After 1968, she saw that Hyannisport, a place where there were no adults left, would become a toxic site for young people. She was right. Soon RFK's brood and the cousins they controlled were playing a generational version of *Lord of the Flies* there, while her own son preserved his relative innocence in unlikely venues—the island of Skorpios or the yacht *Christina*, with its El Grecos and its barstools covered in the skin of whale testicles.

While the others grew up Kennedy, as that concept was being reinterpreted in the '70s and '80s, John Jr. grew up Bouvier. On his infrequent visits to the Compound, they called him a "mama's boy" and, even more cruelly, from their point of view, taunted him for not being a "real Kennedy."

He was indeed an observer rather than a participant. He watched as his cousins engaged in the heavy drug use and casual self-destruction that became events in their postmodern Kennedy Olympiad. These other Kennedys—real Kennedys—became as much an object lesson for him as for everyone else. They had no one teaching them, as Jackie taught him and Caroline, how to control their imagery or to normalize a taste for the grandiose. Nabbed in heroin buys, shown paralyzing strangers in their vehicles, revealed to have exploited 14-year-old baby-sitters—while he merely rollerbladed in Central Park—the cousins were a godsend in that they made him, an awesomely unique figure, seem a regular guy.

Almost without willing it, he had the ability to shine a light on the dreary, airless place the Kennedy Legacy had become. It was said that he studied his father's life. As he did, it must have occurred to him how little the new Kennedy construct had to do with JFK. In 1979, when John Jr. spoke at the dedication of the Kennedy Library, he heard of the outrage expressed by Bobby's eldest son, Joe, over the fact that, while there had been a 30-minute film about JFK, the one about RFK was only five minutes long. But the apparent discrepancy in the two brothers' relative importance was a mirage. The Kennedy Legacy was clearly dominated by Bobby and the changes he was said to have undergone in his last, intense years.

Composed after Dallas and bearing the indelible imprint of the Sixties, the Legacy turned engagement, moral passion, and social concern into family shtick. It became a family ideology implicating every male Kennedy and allowing them only one posture—that of Tribune to the Underclass. It was so

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powerful that it scooped up the personality of JFK and included him too, when in fact he was something else altogether—cool, detached, remote, a creature of irony who distrusted commitment. (In one famous moment, when his brother was brooding in the Oval Office, Jack told a friend who noticed it, "Oh, don't worry about Bobby: He's probably all choked up over Martin Luther King and the Negroes today.")

As they fetishized themselves, the Kennedys proposed that the Legacy was based on martyrs who offered themselves as ritual sacrifices to enliven and ennoble our democracy. This was believable until Chappaquiddick. The day Mary Jo Kopechne died, things began to change. The accident and the clumsy attempt to cover it up began to drain the Kennedys' accumulated capital. It brought into the foreground the nihilism present in the family's rise from the Irish-Catholic ghetto: Rules are the way they keep us down; rules are for suckers. After this, the Legacy was no longer just idealism and compassion. It was also ruthlessness and heedless appetite, which ignored the collateral damage and, when caught, protested that this was merely the cosmic whimsy of the "Kennedy curse."

Staggering under the weight of Bobby's Legacy, Teddy made that contribution. He also took all the moral passion and sense of discovery characteristic of RFK's last days and homogenized it into party-line liberalism, making sure that every Kennedy male who came after was a man in its iron mask. It was a commitment so petrified that it could not change even as the liberalism it supposedly embodied changed. Gradually, the Democratic party withdrew from the family, leaving them members only of the Kennedy party.

John Jr. escaped all this. He maintained at least a tincture of the promise that Ted and the others had leeched out of the Legacy. He was a beefcake narcissist who was oddly selfless, with a charisma that was genuine in spite of himself; a symbol who was able to offer himself for the consumption of popular culture without getting eaten up. He showed a glimpse of the personal while remaining aloof—an icon with a human face.

Politics was in *his* blood too. But unlike his cousins, who began that grim death march toward power even when they were teenagers, he came to the subject on his own terms—as editor of a gossipy magazine that regarded politics as a contact sport, but not as Mortal Kombat. (Perhaps this was in homage to his father and the left-out part of the Legacy, since JFK sometimes said that he might have been a journalist if his elder brother hadn't died, causing the old man to use him as a prosthetic for his own ambition.)

As his cousins sweated and grunted, managing only to look like little boys clomping around in Daddy's shoes, John Jr. seemed not only more mature but ever more Kennedy as well. He could lend them the authority of his name as in 1994, when he went to Massachusetts to help rescue his Uncle Ted from his sinking Senate race. But while he dabbled in the family, he also didn't hesitate to create a great schism three years later, when he wrote in his magazine that his cousins Joe and Michael were "poster boys for bad behavior."

It was as close as any Kennedy has come to issuing a moral condemnation of a blood relative, although it was still a half-gesture. "Perhaps they deserved it," he proceeded to write of the public disapproval of their misdeeds. "Perhaps they knew better. To whom much is given, much will be required, right?" The repetition of "perhaps" and that last "right" captured it all and showed him to be his father's son: casual, irreverent, launching a serious critique while appearing to disown it, using irony as squid's ink to create a stir and then make his getaway.

Joe accused him of exploiting the situation to give *George* a boost: "Ask not what you can do for your cousin, but what he can do for your magazine." And there was no doubt some truth in that. But there was also no mistaking the generational challenge John Jr. had issued. "I am not you," he was saying, "I'm not bound by that Kennedy Legacy you have shrunken and diminished in returning it to the ward-heeling barroom politics of our great-grandfathers' day."

The sense of possibility that John F. Kennedy Jr. embodied had less to do with America than with the Kennedy family itself. He was warning about what a dreadful and dreary burden the Legacy had become, and was offering the Kennedys one last chance to escape from themselves. In the unbearable lightness of his dying, he has sealed the family's fate. **NR**

■ THE NATION II ■

Death of the Prince

And a nation's grief.

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

I NEVER met him, but a few months before he died, I got a nanosecond's sense of what it must have been like for him. My wife and I were walking out of the Washington Hilton lobby following the White House Correspondents dinner, a big, black-tie, celebrity-rich target environment. Tourists and gawkers were lined up behind ropes on either side as we exited. Suddenly, the crowd began to make this . . . noise. I'd never heard anything like it. A collective groan of wonderment, pleasure, awe. Flashbulbs began to go off. Individual squeaks. I made out, "It's him!" . . . "There!" . . . "Oh, God, it's him!"

As it happened, it wasn't him—it was a near look-alike, Jamie Rubin, the State Department spokesman. But since he was walking out of the Hilton with Carolyn Bessette Kennedy on his arm, that made him, for a brief, shining moment, a JFK Jr. simulacrum. It must have been a thrill, as much as it must have been a bore for the real thing, who had to live with it every—effing—public moment of his life. No wonder he liked flying. Up in the sky, there are no photographers, no passersby with turning heads. When I read last week that three top-secret KH-11 spy satellites were scanning the waters off Gay Head from 250 miles above, it seemed fitting—the ultimate paparazzi, in search of a few final pictures.

One other vignette: A few years ago, in the building in which I work in New York, I noticed a few extra amps of electricity humming through the corridors

Mr. Buckley is editor of *Forbes FYI*. His new book is *Little Green Men*.

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one morning. Secretaries were talking to one another in excited whispers. In fact, middle-aged managers were doing a bit of buzzing, too. What could be the cause of excited susurrus? Celebrities are regular droppers-in at the Forbes Building: Reagan, Gorbachev, Mrs. Thatcher, Bill Gates—they've all come to nosh. So what was the cause of this collective water-cooler tachycardia? John Kennedy was coming by to try to persuade Forbes to buy a chunk of his fledgling magazine, *George*.

The Forbes executive he was coming to visit, informed that Kennedy was in the lobby, asked his secretary to escort him up, knowing that it would give her something to tell her grandchildren. "I . . . couldn't," she said to him, not trusting herself not to faint in the elevator riding up with the prince. "*You* bring him up." Now, that's professionalism.

JFK Jr. handled this burden that life thrust on him with extraordinary grace, modesty, and humor. But his death, like that of his counterpart, Princess Diana—to whom he privately likened himself with some measure of amusement, according to Douglas Brinkley, his own private Arthur Schlesinger Jr.—is problematic, not only for its circumstances, but for its infantilizing impact on us all.

In the *Forbes* office the Monday After, my colleague Patrick Cooke announced wincingly that, while he had been showering that morning, the radio referred to "John F. Kennedy, American hero" not once but three times. The word *hero* has long since been drained by the media of all real meaning, but until that day, Patrick had not heard it applied to someone whose recklessness had resulted in the death of two young women, so near the 30th anniversary of the day another man in his family had caused the drowning death of another young woman, on the same island.

From there, our conversation turned toward a statement I had seen in the newspapers the day before: A Coast Guard spokesman had claimed that the search effort was no larger in scale than it would have been for anyone else. Patrick and I had a good honk and snort over that one. It does us good to know that when our ship goes down, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration vessel *Rude* will be dispatched with side-scanning sonar to find our tub; that KH-11 satellites will be expensively retasked. The point, only, is: Why should the Coast Guard feel compelled to utter such carbonated gargle? No one—not I, not Patrick—would begrudge *any* effort to find survivors. But as the day went on, it became obvious that the haze over the Atlantic that had contributed to the plane's fatal plunge extended over the entire country, or least the Eastern Seaboard, home to the nattering classes of the media establishment.

Douglas Brinkley, in *Newsweek*, was writing, "My job as friend was to play the historian, and at a recent lunch I compared him to John Quincy Adams, the son of the second U.S. president, a fellow Massachusettsean whose entire political career was centered on escaping his father's shadow, on proving his own worth in the political arena."

Brinkley had to write his piece on Saturday, in the hours immediately following the first dreadful announcement, and even intellectual historians are not immune to the tug of the human heart. But—puhleeze. And it did no further service to his friend's memory that he went on to quote Kennedy as saying that boxer Mike Tyson, who had been re-jailed—having attacked some motorists, behavior apparently not encouraged within the probational curriculum—had been so because of "racism . . . pure and simple." Such statements serve only to remind us that, in the last year, Kennedy was capable of other lapses of judgment, such as his friendship with pornographer Larry Flynt, or his commissioning of an article for his magazine by conspiracy-monger Oliver Stone. In it, Stone referred to King Henry VIII's imprisonment of Thomas à Beckett for opposing his marriage to Anne Boleyn. Should I write a Letter to the Editor, I wondered at the time? Let it go, let it go. Why reveal oneself as a reader of a magazine no one else read?

In *Esquire* once, back when it was *Esquire*, Norman Mailer—who had inaugurated his journalistic career with a memorable piece on Kennedy Jr.'s father at the 1960 Democratic convention ("Superman Comes to the Supermarket")—wrote a piece about celebrity in which he recalled arriving at some New York event with Jackie Kennedy. As they entered the building, their eyeballs were cooked by the flashbulbs of a dozen paparazzi. Mailer, reaching as usual for the Big Thought (God bless him), said to Jackie, "It's these lights that make idiots of us all." That quote has been replaying in my mind for days.

To his credit, those lights did not, for the most part, make an idiot of young John Kennedy. Why he chose to take off in those conditions will be a subject of discussion . . . at a more appropriate time. Suffice for now to say that he lived his life well and becomingly.

It's the rest of us I'm worried about. As I drifted off to sleep the other night, to the sound of the Charlie Rose show, always a source of thoughtful discussion, I listened to three very intelligent guests saying the most extraordinary things. Is it possible, as Morpheus grew insistent and my lids grew heavier, that I heard the woman say that at age 38 he had been "cut down in his perfection"? I think she did say that. But it is really possible that this observation prompted a gentleman, a fine and distinguished journalist and biographer, to remark affirmingly, "Alexander the Great . . . Jesus."

I groped for the OFF button. Where was the remote control? Quickly—before Pierre Salinger came on to reveal that it was, after all, a missile that had brought down the plane. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Salt Lake Steeler

Orrin Hatch enters the fray.

JAY NORDLINGER

Concord, N.H.

HE'S late, but he's in: Orrin Hatch is running for president. When he announced on July 1, he was only $36 million behind—that's the amount George W. Bush had raised. Said Hatch to the press, "I believe in miracles—and it will take one to elect me."

Why so late, in this age of the grossly early campaign? It took him a while to make up his mind. His family is

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Female Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 103	$ 125	$ 145	$ 183	$ 205
40	$ 123	$ 158	$ 185	$ 238	$ 260
45	$ 190	$ 215	$ 253	$ 330	$ 385
50	$ 253	$ 290	$ 363	$ 490	$ 495
55	$ 365	$ 413	$ 550	$ 835	$ 1,015
60	$ 503	$ 615	$ 845	$ 2,135	$ 2,400
65	$ 775	$ 975	$1,593	$ 3,900	$ 3,900
70	$1,338	$ 1,600	$2,970	$ 7,220	$ 7,220
75	$2,275	$ 4,870	$5,820	$10,370	$12,420

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 123	$ 138	$ 165	$ 223	$ 253
40	$ 148	$ 183	$ 225	$ 288	$ 335
45	$ 225	$ 300	$ 360	$ 450	$ 513
50	$ 338	$ 455	$ 525	$ 743	$ 828
55	$ 500	$ 670	$ 768	$ 1,640	$ 2,330
60	$ 783	$ 990	$1,335	$ 3,630	$ 3,630
65	$1,330	$ 1,650	$2,693	$ 5,250	$ 5,250
70	$2,473	$ 3,175	$4,860	$ 8,790	$ 8,790
75	$4,400	$ 7,443	$9,600	$13,260	$15,030

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opposed—not hostile, but cautious. He also believes that the $36 Million Man can't win the general—W. is flat-out "unelectable," says Hatch, quickly softening that to a "probably unelectable." Clearly, the longtime Utah senator regards Bush as a pampered upstart. "The media will make mincemeat out of him," he warns. And if W. does happen to reach the Oval Office, "his learning curve will be very steep."

Neither is Hatch a great fan of Sen. John McCain. He's a "true hero" for his courage in Vietnam, Hatch says, but would "destroy the Republican party" with his campaign-finance reform: "The Democrats would still have the big soft money from the unions, and we'd have nothing. It'd be the ruin of us." Hatch hopes to be the conservative alternative in the race should Bush do a swan dive.

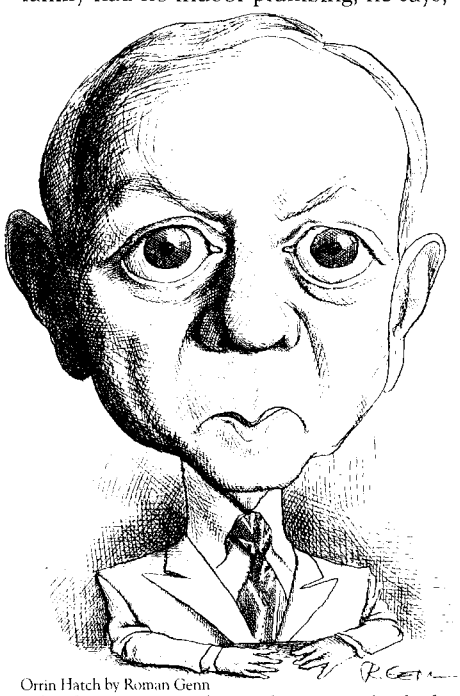
One question to ask about Hatch's candidacy is, Why not? He's about as prominent a Republican politician as there is these days. He has served in the Senate since the mid '70s and been at the center of many a brawl—over abortion, taxes, the budget, Robert Bork, Clarence Thomas, and so on. He certainly has no problem with shyness: Over and over he declares that he's the best man for the job—"the most experienced, the most qualified, the most battle-hardened," the most everything. "I've got guts," he says, "and if I get a little money, I'll tell you what: I'll win this doggone thing." (Hatch has a large vocabulary of mild oaths, which he deploys liberally.)

Here in Concord, on Day One of his campaign, he has already hit on a gimmick. It seems that he was in a small gathering a couple of days ago, and the subject of W.'s $36 million came up. A woman said, "Why, Senator, all you need is for a million people to give you 36 dollars, and you're all caught up"—whereupon she ripped off a check for 36 bucks. Hatch keeps the check, laminated, in his breast pocket and waves it wherever he goes, exhorting the people to send similar checks to his campaign.

At every turn, he identifies himself with Ronald Reagan, recalling the "shining city on a hill" image the ex-president loves so well. He reminds people that he was Reagan's "principal surrogate" in the '80 campaign: "I was Nancy's date at a big dinner up here! And I was with them in their motel room, sitting on the couch, when the returns came in."

Like Reagan, Hatch is running as an "outsider," an "anti-Establishment" warrior—which may seem a little odd for the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. But, he protests, "I've been an outsider all of my life. The Establishment has never had any use for me. I've always been a thorn in their side, and I go my own way."

Hatch is also waging a bit—more than a bit—of a log-cabin campaign. People may think of him as a white-bread Salt Lake Mormon, but he's actually a gritty Pittsburgher, a poor steel-town boy who worked his way up from nothing. The family had no indoor plumbing, he says,



Orrin Hatch by Roman Genn

which meant that the Hatch kids trooped 100 yards along a dirt path to an outhouse (which is why "I never pass up a bathroom"). He supported himself as a janitor and a lathe operator ("I was the fastest, the best," he brags, "and I could still do it darn well"). A break came when he won an honors scholarship to a Pittsburgh law school. "I know what it's like to be hungry," he avows.

And he is not above a little class warfare, noting that other candidates are "children of privilege." Does he feel a speck sheepish about using such language about his rivals? "Heck no!" he says defiantly, although with a half-smile and a twinkle. "We do have some class difference out there in the country. Why shouldn't I talk about it?" He plans to run "an unusual thing: a Republican campaign for the working people." He will get "the blacks, the Hispanics, and everyone else," he says. "The Democrats just want to exploit them. I want to help them." If given the chance, "I'll change the face of this party. We'll have a big Republican party for the people, not the fat cats—and we'll still do all right by the fat cats!"

All day long, he hammers his pet issues: the judiciary, taxes, foreign policy, guns. The next president "will appoint three Supreme Court justices!" he exclaims. "And half the federal judiciary! Clinton's already appointed one half. If the Democrats get the other half, we'll never get this country back!" On foreign policy, he is an unapologetic hawk, chastising his fellow Republicans (although not the internationalist McCain) for their creeping isolationism. As for taxes, he touts his record as a cutter, referring to the famed Kemp-Roth bill of 1978 as the "Kemp-Roth-Hatch bill." ("Well," he later insists, "it used to be called that!") When it comes to guns, he sees a division between those advocating controls and—how's this for bluntness?—"people who want to be free."

The issue on which he is utterly untempered is abortion. He talks about it passionately, even when he doesn't need to. Asked before a clutch of TV cameras about "litmus tests" for judges, he launches into a graphic description of a partial-birth abortion—the scissors, the skull, the whole works. His eyes are on fire. Once, when he starts to say "pro-choice," he chokes on the "ch" and switches to "pro-abortion." Towards the end of the day, talking about his family in Pittsburgh, he describes his eight brothers and sisters, one of whom "died in pregnancy." He counts that unborn child as a sibling.

Though viewed as an arch-right-winger in most quarters, Hatch has been attacked by conservatives (including the editors of NATIONAL REVIEW) for his propensity to compromise—as in his legislative alliances with Ted Kennedy, a friend. He is both mystified and irked by the criticism. "I'm a member of Congress," he says. "I deal in the realm of the relative, not of the absolute. If I can't get 100 percent, I try for 90. If I

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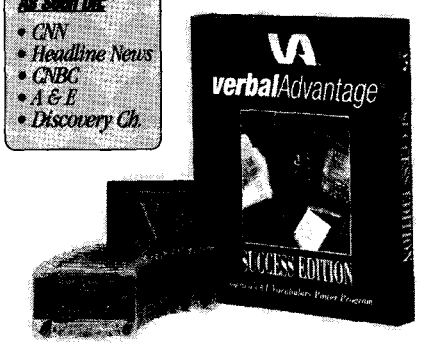

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can't get that, I go for 80. And so on—until I can climb back up to 100." He, as much as W., regards himself as a "compassionate conservative," though he avoids those words. He likes to say that government "should help those who can't help themselves but would if they could." He's proud of his efforts against pediatric AIDS—and for daycare, which is why he visits a local children's center.

A bouquet of kids greets him at the entrance. Bounding out of the van, he wades into them, saying, "Do you know that I'm the guy who passed the legislation so that you could have this?" He sees their names written on a banner. "Who's Jesse?" he asks. A hand goes up. "I have a son named Jess," Hatch says, "and my dad was Jesse, and so was my brother who died in the war." There is a Joshua, too. "Who's Joshua?" Hatch cries. A boy confesses. "That's a pretty important name. You better live right! Joshua was a very great Old Testament prophet!" Hatch may be a touch goofy in this situation, but he is totally, exuberantly himself.

On the plane back to Washington, his stumping concluded, Hatch considers the Mormon question: Can a member of that church be elected? "I've experienced prejudice my whole life," he says, citing several instances. "I can't do anything about the bigots, but I can try to do something about the people who are misinformed." Well, hang on a second: Didn't your friend Ted Kennedy use an anti-Mormon gambit against his (Mormon) opponent when it looked like he was losing his 1994 reelection race? "He played that card, yes," answers Hatch. "He denied he did it—said it was someone else in his campaign—but I know it was him." So did he dress Kennedy down? "Yes, I did. But it's very hard for me to stay mad at people. I can't hold a grudge."

Another question: Is your faith the most important thing in the world to you? Hatch thinks long and hard. He then replies, "My family is. But my faith is very important too. I try to follow Christ every day."

Hatch may not stay in long, but he will be a joyful campaigner. He obviously loves it. He is 65, but a fit, sprightly 65. His stamina is impressive. Even after hours, he makes his arguments with terrific animation and force, always on the make, but nicely. He pesters everyone in sight about those 36-dollar checks. Here is one politician who's hardly afraid "to ask." And he is every inch a missionary, Mormon or otherwise. As a reporter is about to leave, Hatch takes his arm and says, "I want you to know something: I love everyone. There is good in everyone. And I've always tried to do what's right, even when I've been wrong."

Simple stuff. But that's Hatch—and not bad. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 II** ■

George W. Clinton?

The me-too kids.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

THE primaries and conventions have yet to be held, but the first shots have already been fired in the 2000 general-election campaign. The Democrats, having decided that their opponent will be George W. Bush, have begun testing various attacks on him and his philosophy. Their best campaigner, President Clinton, recently lit into "compassionate conservatism" as (a) insincere gesture politics, (b) a front for the hardline Gingrichian conservatism of congressional Republicans, and (c) his own idea.

It could be all three, of course. Indeed, the problem that "compassionate conservatism" poses for the Democrats is not that it is a particularly strong Republican slogan but that all the arguments against it evoke too many embarrassing memories of the Clinton years. Take, for instance, criticism (a). The president gave it as follows:

> This "compassionate conservatism" has a great ring to it, you know? It sounds so good. . . . And as near as I can tell, here's what it means: "I like you, I really do. And I would like to be for the patients' bill of rights, and I'd like to be for closing the gun-show loophole . . . I'd like to do these things, but I just can't, and I feel terrible about it."

Rattling good partisan fun, to be sure, and the audience loved it. After the laughter, however, doubts creep in. It is Clinton, after all, who is famous for feeling other people's pain and even more famous for doing nothing about it (ask those few overt gays who want to join the military) or even piling on yet more pain, which he subsequently feels all the more keenly (recall those rich people whose taxes he later admitted raising "too much"). After seven years of compassionate liberalism, the roster of Democratic constituencies that feel betrayed by Clinton adds up to the entire party, with the sole exception of the feminists, for whom he has reserved his single act of fidelity—keeping infanticide legal.

Then there is criticism (b), that "compassionate conservatism" is a thin disguise for the hard stuff. In the president's own words: "Are the architects of the revolution in 1995, the Contract *on* America, the heirs of Newt Gingrich who are still basically in control of the Congress, all of whom were early endorsers of Mr. Bush—is this an umbrella under which they can be protected from the rainstorm of public opinion until they get to where they can do what they want, or is it something different?"

Or is this the voice of conscience speaking? Almost the only issues that Clinton has *not* betrayed are the balanced budget and welfare reform he adopted in cooperation with Gingrich's Republican Congress. The president has doubtless convinced himself by now that, as a good New Democrat, he has always been in favor of these reforms, but in fact he wanted to postpone balancing the budget to 2002 and he twice vetoed welfare reform before embracing it enthusiastically for the 1996 election. (Oh, yes: Hillary spurned the pleas of the Children's Defense Fund and went along too.)

Finally, there is criticism (c)—which rather touchingly reveals Clinton's pride of authorship: "The rhetoric of compassionate conservatism . . . half those speeches sound like I gave them in '92 . . . It's very flattering in a way, you know, because it replicates the rhetoric." And his point here is about more than merely rhetoric. A conservatism that is situated midway between the congressional

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)", in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements". When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees". In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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Republicans and the Democratic party has a strong whiff of Clinton's 1996 strategy of "triangulation" about it.

The Clinton attack drew a curiously defensive response from George W. and his campaign. The governor *had* done things, such as signing into law higher penalties for gun crimes and ending social promotion in schools (both conservative ideas but, if anything, commendably uncompassionate). He *did* have a philosophy—that solutions were to be found in people and local communities, not in Clinton's centralized Washington. Why, he had even forced Vice President Gore to address Latinos in Spanish by speaking in that language first.

Bush then tried to make these cautious noises sound courageous by striking a bold stance: "I welcome the label ["compassionate conservative"], and on this ground I take my stand." But this defiant platitudinarianism (e.g., "I am not frightened to say, sir, that I love this great country of ours") cannot disguise the fact that Clinton had a good point in criticism (c): Compassionate conservatism is a form of what used to be disparaged as "me-tooism" by conservatives. Then again, Clinton's various political stances—the Third Way, triangulation, New Democratic politics—are forms of "me-tooism" as well. Both parties are now maneuvering to occupy the same political territory while denouncing each other as extremist.

How did things come to this pass? After Reagan and Thatcher forged a new post-socialist politics in the Eighties, the parties of the Left accepted capitalism ("Me too") but claimed they could run it more compassionately than the Right. Now the parties of the Right are claiming that they can run compassion more effectively than the Left ("Me too too"). Imagine a debate conducted between two ventriloquists each of whose dummy is sitting on the other ventriloquist's knee.

It is, indeed, hard to see what Election 2000 will be about. One candidate will propose a policy, and the other will respond with either more or less of the same. Take environmentalism. Bush has already signaled his acceptance of global warming and thus removed any real prospect of mounting a serious intellectual attack on the vice president's ecological hysteria. Or taxes. If Bush proposes a tax cut, Gore will respond with a "more responsible" one. And so on. The likelihood is that the election will be won by the candidate who most soothes the voters. That would seem to favor Gore.

But no one can at this distance really predict who will win the election. And it is what happens after elections that is truly important. In a "me too" political environment, the winning party in the election usually turns out to be the losing party in government.

Consider President Clinton himself—the great "me too" candidate of modern times. Set aside for a moment the fact that he is personally a sleazebag and a mountebank, and ask, Which party—the Republicans or the Democrats—has most cause to regret that he was elected in 1992 and reelected in '96? Which party has done better in state and congressional elections since then? Which party has seen its most cherished principles on welfare and economics abandoned? Which party has actually seen its natural constituencies grow most rapidly in prosperity—the Party of Wall Street or the Party of Social Work? And which party has been forced against its will to save the political skin of a leader who has done nothing for it?

Given the above, a dispassionate computer, programmed with conservative opinions but lacking conservative loyalties, would probably urge Republicans to vote for Al Gore over George W. Bush next year. And consider this: Why would it be wrong? **NR**

■ **ASIA** ■

Taiwan Gets Bold

What the United States should do.

MARK P. LAGON

THE issue of Taiwan and the mainland has come again to the fore. On July 10, Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui gave an interview to German radio in which he suggested that dialogue between his island and Beijing should be seen as "state-to-state" negotiation. Two days later, one of his national-security officials identified these remarks as a departure from the "one China" policy that has Taipei and Beijing—and Washington—pretend that Taiwan and the PRC make up a single country.

This provoked a predictably hostile response from China, which warned of the direst consequences. Beijing decided it was a good time to confirm its possession of the neutron bomb—the design for which, according to the Cox report, was stolen from the United States.

How did we get to this point? It's important to remember who provoked whom. In July 1995 and March 1996, China conducted missile tests close to Taiwan during the island's first significant democratic elections. After administration officials unwisely suggested to the press that the U.S. maintained "strategic ambiguity" about whether it would assist Taiwan if the island were attacked, President Clinton sent two aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait to put an end to the tests, which were effectively blockading the island's main ports.

The carrier deployment might have suggested the benefits of firmness—but the administration subsequently sought to appease Beijing by urging Taiwan not to be provocative. A delegation of former Clinton officials—including William Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili—took this message to Taiwan in January 1998. Shortly thereafter, ex-defense official Chas Freeman published an article in *Foreign Affairs* calling, in its title, for "Restraining Taiwan." His position is all the more interesting in light of the fact that, during the 1995–96 crisis, he was the man to whom a Chinese general delivered an infamous threat—that China might go nuclear if the U.S. defended Taiwan. "You care a lot more about Los Angeles than you do about Taipei," the general said.

Beijing's 1995–96 saber-rattling toward Taiwan had chiefly to do, not with Taiwan's independence, but with Taiwan's democracy. China conducted its missile tests during the island's elections because those elections posed a

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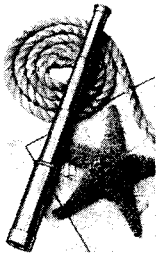

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threat to the legitimacy of the Beijing regime. Yet President Clinton formally denounced the idea of Taiwanese independence—and the notion of any Taiwanese role as a state in international bodies—during his visit to China last summer. His aides suggested that his pronouncement was made outside the capital of Beijing to be less an affront to Taiwan. But it was in Shanghai that he spoke, sight of the historic U.S.-PRC communiqué of 1972. In that document, the United States recognized that both Beijing and Taiwan believed there to be only one China. But Clinton's 1998 Shanghai statement held that *the United States* subscribed to the same, with no room for recognition of an island that had become democratic.

So why did Taiwan shift its own position in July 1999? Domestic politics played a crucial role. This wouldn't be the first time Lee Teng-hui, a Kuomingtang politician, has undercut the opposition Democratic Progressive Party by coopting its only tangible agenda item—independence. Lee is also trying to help his handpicked successor fight off a more gregarious rival who is calling for closer ties with Beijing.

Taiwanese politics aside, Taipei may have wished to claim statehood before the military balance between Taiwan and China got any worse. The PRC is intensely about the business of acquiring high-tech weapons, a larger missile arsenal, and the means for air superiority—all making the seizure of Taiwan feasible in about ten years.

To his credit, Lee realizes that it will take boldness to lay the groundwork for the only permissible term of reunification: the democratization of the mainland. Lee is hardly a status quo politician. For instance, he turned Taiwan into a multiparty democracy, giving voice to the indigenous Taiwanese, who had been excluded in favor of the Nationalists who fled the mainland in 1949.

What should the United States do? First, stop criticizing Taiwan for being provocative. Doing so only prolongs the current crisis by giving Beijing the sense that we do not back Taiwan, and it undermines efforts to deter China from taking military action against the island.

Second, find tangible ways to give Taiwan the help and respect it deserves. Putting ceilings on levels of consultation with a democracy is simply wrong. Higher-level contacts, arms sales, and theater-missile-defense cooperation will likely deter a PRC attempt at reunification by force. Those steps would indicate that the United States will help Taiwan should the island be attacked. And these are precisely the steps prescribed by the Helms-Torricelli Taiwan security bill under consideration in Congress.

Third, give Taiwan "face" internationally. For instance, Taiwan has met the standards for joining the World Trade Organization as a customs territory. But Beijing insists that the PRC be admitted first (a position that Hong Kong, as a separate customs territory in the WTO, is assisting by holding up the last necessary accord with Taiwan). Open and prosperous enough to import more than one and a half times as many U.S. goods as the mainland colossus, Taiwan is a model for the market reforms that China will need before it can legitimately enter the WTO.

Taiwan also offers the best model for China's political evolution—neither a Singapore that squelches free speech in the name of "Asian values" nor a Hong Kong that (as it has recently) behaves as a lackey. If the U.S. disputes Taiwan's de facto statehood, it will subvert the message that China should move from a one-party system to a democracy—as Taiwan has.

Last, in order to encourage the domestic evolution of China and to bolster regional stability in the meantime, the United States should upgrade cooperation with *real* partners in the region—namely, the democracies: Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and perhaps India. In lieu of Clinton's imprudent pursuit of a "strategic partnership" with China, a "real partners" doctrine would signal to Beijing, and every other government, what kind of nation the U.S. rewards with friendship. And a very good place to start would be to treat Taiwan—an admirably assertive democracy with 22 million citizens—as a state. **NR**

Mr. Lagon is Council on Foreign Relations Fellow at the Project for the New American Century.

■ EDUCATION ■

Board Games

Business backs a losing education strategy.

DANIELLE DUNNE WILCOX

& CHESTER E. FINN JR.

THE idea seemed so promising. A privately organized National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would identify "highly accomplished" teachers in elementary and secondary schools to be rewarded for their excellence and emulated by other teachers. Everyone knows this field needs such a standard. In fact, the country is obsessed with the question of how to get and keep better teachers. Congress is weighing a $10 billion teacher-quality bill, and almost every state is agonizing over teacher certification, testing, and pay.

But twelve years have passed, and the board has turned out to be another union-dominated, establishment outfit, steeped in "progressive" ideology, visiting new woes on our schools. That's no surprise: Two thirds of the board's 63 members are teachers, and almost all of them are leaders or hand-picked members of the two big national teacher unions, which have no serious interest in reform. What's harder to explain is why so many business leaders are going along.

The board has built up a great deal of political momentum—if President Clinton has his way, Congress will soon fork over another $18.5 million for it. North Carolina governor Jim Hunt, a Democrat who has long been a major booster of the board (and whose state is

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one of 13 that offer extra pay to board-certified teachers), has invited his fellow governors to an August conclave to sing its praises—and, one assumes, to press for additional federal dollars to sustain it. Otherwise tough-minded Republicans—including Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson, Florida governor Jeb Bush, and Ohio senator George Voinovich—are also enamored.

Yet after a dozen years of R&D and the investment of $120 million, the board cannot demonstrate that its blue-ribbon winners actually produce higher-achieving students. Worse, the board actually rewards teachers for being good at the opposite of what most parents think teachers should excel at. Its idea of a great teacher is one who embraces "constructivist" pedagogy, "discovery" learning, and cultural relativism—not one who imparts to students fundamental knowledge or even has it himself.

Consider this standard for middle schools: "Accomplished teachers establish caring, inclusive, stimulating and safe school communities where students can take intellectual risks, practice democracy and work both collaboratively and independently." Nothing about mastering a subject here—or in the board's evaluations, which look at lesson plans, videotapes of classes, samples of student work, and written commentaries about teaching practice.

In its evaluations, the board pointedly ignores writing errors in essays submitted by English teachers. Why fuss, so long as those teachers are able to establish "inclusive school communities"? The board doesn't fuss about students' errors either. It praises instructors who don't correct their students' work because they're worried about the young ones' self-esteem.

Reading expert Sandra Stotsky recently reviewed the board's standards and found there a disdain for factual knowledge and "even the teaching of the curriculum that a school district has mandated." In this way, the board's approach undermines real reforms in the states. Even as several states and localities prescribe specific skills and knowledge for their students and schools, the board puts its stamp of approval on teachers who excel in the opposite. Its math standards downplay the importance of "mastering routine procedural skills."

American Express and IBM wouldn't dream of judging their own employees' performance via portfolios and videotapes. But they and other corporate sponsors have funneled a steady stream of dollars to the board. A senior executive at Procter & Gamble serves as its co-chairman. Edward B. Rust Jr. of State Farm Insurance (a million-dollar donor) recently lauded it in congressional testimony on behalf of the Business Roundtable.

Businesses are also promoting the conventional wisdom, largely formed by the education establishment, in favor of tighter regulation. According to this view, states should make all their new teachers pass through ever-longer training programs; a single nationwide standard should force teachers to study pedagogy, self-esteem, and multiculturalism still more; new teachers should be tested on their "professional knowledge," not their subject matter; and once they're on the job, they should be evaluated only by other educators—and never on how much their students are actually learning. Unfortunately, this approach is a failure. The burgeoning rules and tests that govern teacher certification in most places have little to do with true classroom performance.

Such eminent businessmen as David Rockefeller Jr. have backed this strategy of piling up requirements. Almost all the major business groups (the National Alliance of Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers) recently endorsed a paper on "improving the quality of teaching" that toes the establishment line. While paying lip service to teachers who are "knowledgeable in content," the strategies urged in this document mirror those being pressed by the teacher unions and ed schools.

Why have otherwise-sensible business leaders and elected officials been taken in? Maybe they're wired to favor "comprehensive solutions" and "master plans." Perhaps they've been lulled by frequent repetition of the word "standards." Relying on advisors who frequently hail from the ranks of the school

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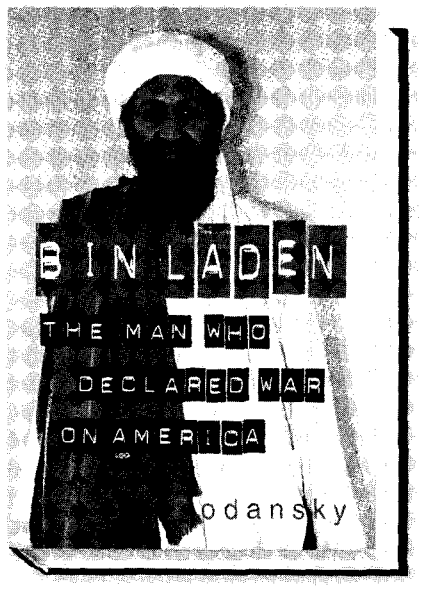

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—HELLE BERING-JENSEN, editorial page editor, *Washington Times*

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establishment, these busy people may not have peered beneath the appealing rhetoric or challenged the soothing assurances. Or possibly they cannot imagine what else to do.

Finally, though, some resistance to the board is developing. More than 50 education leaders have signed a manifesto called "The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them." The manifesto's commonsense approach? States should insist on subject knowledge but otherwise open up entry into teaching. Let the market generate both quality and quantity. Decentralize personnel decisions to individual schools and empower them to pay teachers what they're worth. Then hold schools accountable for their results, with teacher performance judged by what students learn.

That's the approach Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge and his secretary of education, Eugene Hickok, are taking. Ridge and Hickok want both to raise academic standards for teacher-preparation programs and to open an "alternative route" into the public-school classroom for well-educated individuals who don't want to tarry in ed school. Ridge and Hickok have developed the nation's most promising strategy for redefining what it means and what it takes to become a teacher. But the Pennsylvania branch of the National Education Association and the state association of teacher colleges recently sought an injunction to prevent the reforms from taking effect, arguing that by licensing teachers without "training as professional educators" the reforms "have demeaned and devalued the public school teaching profession."

The public schools could learn from private and charter schools in how they regard teacher quality. Those schools live in a marketplace, not a bureaucracy. They hire the best people they can find. They're not wowed by ed-school diplomas. They pay what the market signals they must, to get the people they want. They judge a teacher's effectiveness primarily by pupil achievement. That's what happens when schools are held accountable for their results.

And that's what business leaders would do if they were actually running a school. Will they ever learn? **NR**

■ HISTORY ■

Father of His Country, Only

George Washington faces a bad rap.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

EVERYONE carries a picture of George Washington in his wallet, but he has just made the news, thanks to a slave he may never have met. West Ford (1784?–1863) was owned by one of George's younger brothers, John Augustine Washington. Ford's mother was another one of John Augustine's slaves, named Venus. For several years, Ford's descendants have been trying to publicize the claim that his father was the Father of His Country. On July 7 they hit the jackpot. The *New York Times* ran a story by Nicholas Wade that was courteous, thorough—and highly skeptical of their claim. The networks seized on the article and flew two sisters, Linda Bryant of Aurora, Colo., and Janet Allen of Peoria, Ill., into New York for the morning talk shows. I met them, and their literary agent, when we shared a segment on CBS. As a Washington biographer, I too was highly skeptical, though we all were polite.

Washington has been a projective screen for American fantasies for over 200 years. I have been told that he was gay, Catholic, a pot-smoker, and a hermaphrodite. One of the oldest fairy tales, dating back to the Revolution, is that he was a woman. Why the interest in this story now?

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is the author of *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington* and, most recently, *Alexander Hamilton, American.*

The 42nd president has made political sex a hot topic. As the Clinton White House was fighting for its life in 1998 it smugly reminded Congress that Alexander Hamilton had also been at the center of a sex scandal (the Reynolds Affair). Clinton did it, Hamilton did it—everyone's the same. In fact, the scandals were different (for one thing, Hamilton told the truth), to say nothing of the careers, although now that Sen. Moynihan has endorsed Mrs. Clinton as his successor, they can spend their evenings at his Pindar's Corners farm discussing the similarities between the Report on Manufactures and midnight basketball.

The biggest boost to the West Ford story is given by the ongoing saga of Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings. The claim that he fathered her children is an old one, first published in 1802, but historians tended to discount it, not least because of the bad faith of most of those who made it. Then in 1998 *Nature* published the results of DNA tests which showed that the descendants of Eston Hemings, Sally's last child, carried a Jefferson chromosome. (Such chromosomes are transmitted only along an unbroken line of males. The descendants of Sally's eldest son, Thomas—who represent the only other unbroken line available—did not show the Jefferson chromosome.) Jefferson's defenders pointed out that Eston's father did not have to be the president; any one of numerous Jefferson cousins or nephews could have done the deed. But the Jefferson family had been claiming, for over a century, that Sally's paramour was one of two nephews surnamed Carr. The researchers published by *Nature* had looked for Carr chromosomes, in vain. Now Jefferson supporters were in the somewhat Clintonian position of pointing to a new set of relatives. Perhaps they will turn out to be right, but the burden of proof shifted noticeably.

Jeffersonians also argued that their man was 65 years old when Eston Hemings was born—old enough to do Viagra ads, not father children. They read neither Page Six nor the Pentateuch, both of which record many babies sired by high-status oldsters.

If Jefferson did it, why not Washington?

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The facts of the West Ford story suggest otherwise. Thomas Jefferson indisputably knew Sally Hemings—he owned her, and lived under the same roof with her for decades. There is no evidence to suggest that George Washington even met Venus during the time that West Ford was conceived. Until Christmas 1783 Washington was away from Virginia, winding up the Revolutionary War. Over the next few years he was restoring Mount Vernon, which had decayed in his absence, and receiving a flood of invited and uninvited visitors. Bushfield, John Augustine's plantation, was 95 miles, or a two-day ride, away. All available records indicate that Washington did not visit Bushfield, and that Venus was not taken to Mount Vernon, during this time.

An equal difficulty is the strong chance that George Washington was sterile. He and Martha had no children in the 41 years they were married, but during the seven years of Martha's first marriage (to Daniel Parke Custis) she gave birth four times. Washington brooded over his lack; in a discarded draft of his first inaugural address, he wrote that "Divine Providence hath not seen fit that my blood should be transmitted" (i.e., there could be no Washington Dynasty).

The final reason is psychological. By the time West Ford was born, Washington's views on slavery had already begun to change. He understood that, as a leader of a fight for freedom who owned slaves, he was in an anomalous position. He had commanded free black soldiers during the Revolution (they formed 8 percent of his troops at the Battle of Monmouth). After the war he stopped selling slaves, and rarely bought them. At the end of his life, in 1799, he wrote a will freeing all his slaves and setting aside money to support those too old or too young to work. An exploitative relationship of the kind that West Ford's descendants imagine runs counter to the direction he was moving in.

West Ford's father may well have been a Washington—not George, but one of John Augustine's three sons (Bushrod, Corbin, and George Augustine), who were single men in their late teens and early twenties, living at Bushfield at the time of West Ford's birth. Bushrod Washington, the eldest, moved to Mount Vernon in 1802, bringing his house slaves, including West Ford, with him. He freed West Ford and left him 160 acres of land.

In their defense, the Ford descendants say that their story is the oral tradition of their family. Oral history is a useful source; historians have been quoting Jefferson's *Anas*, a collection of tittle-tattle about his political enemies, for years. But like any other source, it has to be weighed and judged. The Hemings-family oral tradition claimed that all of Sally's children, including Thomas, were sired by Jefferson; the DNA tests prove that the Hemings tradition is at least partly false.

As always, what we learn from the outside story is more important than what we find behind the arras. Jefferson's ambivalence about slavery is best analyzed, not by tracking down his yard children, but by studying his public statements and his letters. The same man who wrote the Declaration of Independence, and wanted to keep slavery out of the territories in the 1780s, was, by 1819, deploring the Missouri Compromise because it proposed to limit slavery's expansion. Jefferson's youthful words gave a deathless definition of liberty, but his old age carried him in the opposite direction from the one Washington had traveled.

Correctly understood, private behavior can deepen our understanding of the character of leaders. If the Sally Hemings story continues to hold up, it throws additional light into the nautilus chambers of Jefferson's opaque and intricate mind. The falsity of the West Ford story confirms what we already know—that Washington said what he meant, and meant what he said, even on an issue as close to home as slavery.

The West Ford story also tells us about how we live now. Blacks are as ambivalent about America as Thomas Jefferson was about them. They want a connection to the American past, but the links they claim are like Masonic handshakes—known only to themselves, and useless as guides to public life.

This attitude almost recalls the days of bondage—the resentfulness, the secretiveness; a sad legacy. The Revolution addressed the issue of black freedom in principle, but for the most part failed to do so in practice—which is one reason we had a Civil War.

Nevertheless blacks have a usable revolutionary past. There were the soldiers in the army. There is also a true Washington connection: one of the only non-relatives mentioned in his will, William Lee, who was given an annuity as well as his freedom. By 1799 Lee was a tipsy old cripple, but during the 1770s and '80s he had been Washington's body servant, and his companion on many a dangerous ride. In his old age he made a point of greeting any veteran who visited Mount Vernon. "The new-time people don't know what we old soldiers did and suffered for the country in the old war. Was it not cold enough at Valley Forge? Yes, it was; and I am sure you remember it was hot enough at Monmouth." In his will, Washington explained why he had singled William Lee out: "for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War."

This was Washington's real kinship. **NR**

■ CROWNS ■

Royal Is as Royal Does

How the Windsors lost their magic.

TAKI THEODORACOPULOS

London

THERE was no pomp, little fanfare, absolutely no clatter of mounted escort, hardly any medieval privilege, and a poverty of glory.

Yes, sports fans, I am talking about Prince Edward's wedding in June to Sophie Rhys-Jones. They are now the Earl and Countess of Wessex, the ancient titles having been conferred on them by Queen Elizabeth II, the long-suffering mother of Britain's most famous dysfunctional family. (Three of her four children have been divorced, two of them as adulterers, one as a cuckold.)

Mr. Theodoracopulos is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW and all-around legend.

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It is a truth universally acknowledged that the British royal family has suffered a sharp loss of public esteem over the past 15 years. Much blame lies with the younger members of the Windsor family, but the most malignant and mendacious press this side of Teheran has had something to do with it too. The well-publicized royal follies are too numerous to mention—Fergie's toe-sucking episode in St-Tropez, Prince Charles's taped admission that he would like to be a tampon. And through it all, the Queen remained stoical, refusing to play the victim à la Hillary. Thanks to her noblesse oblige, the public remains solidly behind the royals, with two thirds of the population on record as wishing to keep them.

Then, on May 1, 1997, Labour won an overwhelming victory at the polls, and the civil servants who advise the Queen decided that, from that moment on, she would be a modern monarch, a decision on par with that of Captain Smith to go full steam ahead on that frigid night in 1912 when he piloted the *Titanic*. So, always ready to serve loyal NR readers, and taking into consideration that I am a direct descendant of Pythia, the Delphic Oracle, I will predict that the modernizing of the monarchy will do for the Windsors approximately what Rasputin did for the Romanovs.

When Louis XVI called himself *citoyen*, that's when he lost his head. Not quite so extreme, today's royal advisors want the Queen to be royal, but not regal. They got off on the wrong foot by asking the two daughters of Prince Andrew and Fergie—Princesses Beatrice, 10, and Eugenie, 9—to renounce their titles when they turn 18. (Even a moron knows that losing a title at 9 is not as painful as losing it at 18, but leave it to bureaucrats to believe otherwise.) Better yet, they had the Queen sitting and sipping tea in a Glasgow council house with Mrs. Susan McCarron, a stroke victim, picked out of a spinmeister's hat to receive the royal visitor.

The real audience for the informal photo-op was the great British public—and it proved as genuine as one of those corporate pictures that show CEOs posing with their products (Perdue and his chickens, the toupée-wearing man and his electric razors). What these PR cretins do not understand (and obviously neither do the royals, with the exception of Prince Philip) is that the British like their monarchs to have the common touch, but not to be common, or even commonplace. They want the Queen in particular to remain majestic—but try telling that to Labour and Tony Blair, not as great a liar as Clinton, though learning fast.

Which brings me to the wedding of the Queen's youngest last month. Again, the Wessex union was a tame affair to say the least. It attracted only two monarchs—the bridegroom's mum, plus the Sultan of Brunei, a minor nob if there ever was one. (The sultan got into the wedding picture with both his wives!) Needless to say, the Earl and Countess made an enemy for life in Rupert Murdoch's *Sun*, England's biggest-selling and smuttiest tabloid. The paper first attacked the couple for accepting an out-of-date title. (What, I wonder, is considered an up-to-date one?) It then attempted to turn them into scapegoats by asking readers to vote on which was the more popular couple: "Posh and Becks" or Edward and Sophie. (Posh is part of the Spice Girls, a pop group; Beckham is a noted soccer player. The two got hitched the same week as the royals and received far more publicity.) An entire page was devoted to a sermon entitled "Snobbery has no place in the new-style Britain." Then the paper went ahead and published a picture of Sophie with her shirt yanked up, and apologized the next day, while running it again.

See what I mean by modernizing the monarchy? No sooner were the hacks given access than they treated the royals in a familiar and rude manner. The pop diva and the footballer kept them at a mile's length (as in Michael Jackson's nuptials), engendering a certain reverence. At the royal reception, the bride and groom had no set places and circulated among the plebes. At the pop one, the bride and groom sat above all others—on thrones.

Given the fact that British society has become so obsessed with those who entertain it, and has elevated their role above that of the monarchy, there is only one way for the latter to go: upwards and away from the crowd. And if anyone still doubts that familiarity breeds contempt, compare the down-at-the-heels Wessex wedding with the one I attended a week later, that of Princess Alexia of Greece, eldest child of ex-King Constantine, to Carlos Morales Quintana, a Spanish architect and a commoner. In attendance were Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip; King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain; King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden; Queen Margrethe of Denmark and her consort; Queen Sonja of Norway—plus all the children of the above. Now that's what I call a royal wedding with a capital R. (Sitting near Prince Charles after the wedding, I asked him how it felt to be surrounded by friends and without a hack in sight; his wide smile said it all.) King Constantine had given a glittering ball two days before, one in which this correspondent did not distinguish himself by getting much too drunk, but better behaved friends tell me it was a night to remember.

Reigning royals flock to Greek royal weddings for two reasons: They wish to show solidarity with a family that has been outrageously treated by Greek leftist politicians; and they know they'll be able to let their hair down among people who understand. Most people erroneously believe that royals are born into a position of privilege and ease. In actual fact it is an extremely hard job, stressful, unrelenting, and one that does not permit the slightest deviation from duty. So when they get together, they are among those who appreciate the rigors of the job, and down comes the hair.

It is also an occasion on which royals inspect future sons- and daughters-in-law. The British papers were extremely respectful of the visiting royals—the reporters and paparazzi were kept behind police lines, where they should be. Predictably, they reported the various shindigs as glittering and majestic affairs, which they happened to be. Distance, after all, lends enchantment, something the clown in the White House should have known long before he told a teeny-bopper television audience what kind of underwear he wears. The Queen of England should take a lesson from her European royal cousins: They have retained the magic by keeping the riff-raff—above all, the media—out. **NR**

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■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Kweisi & Me

Don't hate me 'cause my show is white.

ROB LONG

KWEISI MFUME is mad at me. He and his NAACP feel that my new television series, *Love & Money* (8:30 P.M. Fridays on CBS, premieres on Sept. 24, thank you very much), has an insufficient number of African-American characters.

Actually, it has none. The series is a simple little *Upstairs, Downstairs*-style romantic comedy. Boy, the young superintendent of a swank apartment building on Fifth Avenue, falls for girl, the young heiress who lives in the penthouse. Girl's father, imperious billionaire, hates the idea; boy's father, the doorman of the building, is convinced he's about to be fired. Girl's mother, zany socialite, secretly thinks the whole idea is perfect. Did I mention CBS, Fridays, 8:30 P.M.? Enjoy.

See, once you decide that the girl and the boy are white, well, pretty much everything else falls into place. On some level, I suppose, the boy and/or the girl *could* be black, but then you've got another thing going on, which really isn't the series we're doing. The series we *are* doing (which, incidentally, will compete with an all-black sitcom on the WB network) is a comedy about two young people in love and the disrupting effect on their families. I'm certain that if we really pushed, we could make it *also* about race, in the sense that everything in America these days is about itself and *also* about race, but times are tough in the television business (CBS, Fridays, 8:30 P.M.—have you written that down?), and a clear, funny idea is the best way to keep a show on the air.

Of course, accusations of racism, like accusations of child molestation, tend to provoke exactly the wrong sort of reaction. In each case, the accuser (Kweisi Mfume in the first, a child psychologist on the county payroll in the second) has a kind of magic power to transform an accusation into a statement of fact. I mean, he's Kweisi Mfume, for heaven's sake. If he thinks you're racist . . . well, aren't you?

Q: So, why *aren't* there any African-American characters on your show, Mr. Long?

A: Well, let me first just say that *Love & Money* appears on CBS, Fridays . . .

Q: That's enough now, sir.

A: I'm just setting the context. You see, our show is about two families . . .

Q: (turning to the jury) Two *white* families?

A: Well, yes, but . . .

Q: Two *all*-white families?

A: Well, families tend to run either all or . . . if you'll let me finish . . .

Q: At no point did you think to put in an African-American character?

A: We only have 21-and-a-half minutes to tell the story! We had to introduce seven family members!

Q: And there was no room in your little show for any non-white character?

A: (weakly) Well, the minister is played by a black actor . . .

Q: The *minister*? That old stereotype?

A: No, but . . .

Q: Thank you. You may step down.

What you're left with is the kind of angry sputtering—". . . but but but it's about two families, see! And a romance! So to have . . . I'm not . . . we're . . . that's just *way not true*!"—so prevalent among the guilty.

We could do what the cop shows do, which is to cast an African-American woman as the judge—any judge, every judge—thus creating the impression that, in TV Land, black women have two career options: angels in disguise or magistrates.

What we were *trying* to do is an intergenerational comedy. You don't see a lot of that on television these days. You don't see many people over 40 on television these days. As silly as it sounds, we thought that we were pushing an envelope (not *the* envelope, obviously, but *an* envelope) by featuring three series regulars over 45. There's only so much envelope-pushing a guy can do with his 21-and-a-half minutes.

What we will probably do is what we intended to do all along, which is introduce a best-friend character for our young male lead, probably in Episode Two, probably an African-American—I say *probably* because it hasn't been written yet, won't be filmed until early September, and won't be broadcast until October, at which time maybe Kweisi Mfume will be pointing the finger somewhere else, at somebody else's bread and butter.

In fact, the whole process of network-television production is ill suited to this kind of protest. My writing partner, Dan Staley, and I simply write what we hope is an interesting and funny show, hope that a network orders it as a series, hope that we cast it with nimble, talented actors, hope that it gets some attention (in this respect, at least, thanks go out to Kweisi Mfume), and hope, finally, that enough people tune in. On Fridays. At 8:30 P.M. On CBS.

There is no central authority out here. The idea that there is some racist conspiracy (or, for that matter, some *liberal* conspiracy) that controls the beast of TV strikes anyone at all who actually works in television as ludicrous. In the end, programming decisions are made by an ad hoc committee of diverse players—studios, networks, advertisers—and content decisions are made by another ad hoc committee—writers, actors, an executive or two—all of whom contribute to the cacophony and the chaos of the entertainment business. It's sort of like protesting a certain stock price. Whom do you send letters to? The market in general? That's an awful lot of cc's.

So Kweisi Mfume hates me. (He should also hate Microsoft spell check, by the way, which has a devil of a time with his name. It suggests, as possible replacements, "Quasi Fume" and "Cheese Muffs." I'd love to see Bill Gates dissolve into angry sputtering.) And if we introduce an African-American character, I'm sure that in many ways this will be inadequate, too, and he will still hate me. Now I know how the gun nuts feel. About the only thing that could cheer me up is 21-and-a-half minutes of solid network comedy. Good thing such a show is coming up—on CBS, Fridays, at 8:30 P.M.

See you there. You too, Kweisi? **NR**

Mr. Long is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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■ COVER STORY ■

Losing Private Ryan

Why the citizen-soldier is MIA.

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

THE war over Kosovo was indeed a peculiar one, as its aftermath proved. It was the first American war fought and won without a single U.S. combat casualty, and it was the first one conducted from start to finish without engaging the passions of the American people. Victory prompted not celebrations but sighs of relief. Rather than put on a parade up Fifth Avenue, marking "V-K Day," the nation—bored, impatient, and slightly embarrassed—chose to concentrate on summer vacation.

The Kosovo war was also our first not to produce a single bona fide hero. The pilots who executed the air campaign remain shrouded in anonymity, as remote from the average American as they themselves were from the targets they obliterated in Serbia. When the air squadrons that carried the brunt of the war rotated back from the combat zone, newspapers were content to report their homecoming via brief, colorless wire-service dispatches, printed on the inside pages.

DPA

Nor have the war's chief architects attained glory. So far at least, publishers have suppressed any impulse to cough up a Schwarzkopf or Powell-style advance for Gen. Wesley Clark's memoirs. On his first postwar trip to Washington, the NATO commander found himself reporting not to a specially convened joint session of Congress but to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Those members who bothered to show up greeted Clark with decided chilliness. As for the victorious commander in chief, far from being rewarded with a "bounce" in the polls, his approval ratings actually dipped.

What gives? Why has this latest demonstration of U.S. military might resulted in apathy rather than approbation? Why has NATO's big win over the dictator Milosevic lacked savor? There is widespread ambivalence about U.S. involvement in the Balkans, yes. But there is something else to consider, too: Public lethargy concerning Kosovo is one more sign that the American civil-military compact—not the relationship between senior civilian officials and the Pentagon brass, but the one shared by the people, their military institutions, and the state—is coming unglued.

In recent years, we have heard complaints wafting from military quarters about either the state (personified by the lubricious commander in chief) or civil society (perceived as decadent, self-absorbed, and politically correct). In a democracy, however, the people dictate the status, prerogatives, and role of soldiers. Popular attitudes toward the military are therefore of paramount importance.

Kosovo revealed the extent to which these attitudes are today in flux. Americans show signs that they are increasingly aloof from their military. The problem is not one of hostility or alienation, but rather of indifference. And for a nation that is the world's only superpower, the implications are profound.

Evidence of this popular disengagement predates Kosovo, and it is empirical as well as impressionistic. Indeed, the evidence relates to the U.S. military's greatest point of vulnerability: whether it can attract sufficient numbers of able and motivated young people to serve. For nearly 30 years, the military has been an all-volunteer force. For senior military leaders, initially hostile to proposals to end the draft, this reliance on volunteers has long been a point of pride. For politicians, the all-volunteer force has been a godsend, enabling them to field a powerful military while freeing them from any requirement to impose the most burdensome of all taxes. Yet the success of the all-volunteer force is necessarily precarious, dependent on an obliging populace. Nor was this success foreordained. Indeed, it would not have occurred

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if not for the exceptional leadership of Ronald Reagan.

Reagan's supreme achievement, apart from winning the Cold War, was to preside over the revival of U.S. military power. To be sure, credit should not go to Reagan alone; others played their parts. But Reagan provided the essential ingredient without which other efforts would have availed little: In declaring that Vietnam had been "in truth a noble war," he both absolved Americans who fought there of the unjust charges against them and refuted the claim that to exercise American power is to perpetrate evil. In labeling the Soviet Union an "evil empire," he imparted to the armed forces a renewed sense of purpose and explained to Americans why the prosecution of the Cold War deserved their wholehearted support. In celebrating the valorous G. I.s of an earlier day—"the Boys of Pointe du Hoc," for example—he revived an old-fashioned patriotism the 1960s and '70s had discredited, seemingly forever. In lavishing affection and respect on the troops under his command, he declared them to be the embodiment of that patriotic spirit.

One consequence of Reagan's revitalization was to make it hip to be a soldier. Whereas the all-volunteer force had once been an iffy proposition, it now flourished. Gone were the days when getting the required quantity of recruits meant skimping on quality. Nowhere to be seen were the slugs, druggies, and dropouts who not long before had found their way into uniform. By the middle of the '80s, commanders were bragging that the force was the smartest, best educated, most trainable, and best disciplined in American history.

The contrast between then and now is striking. A decade after Reagan left office, the willingness to serve that he inspired has flagged. Although the "drawdown" of the 1990s has reduced the active military from 2.13 million to 1.36 million—meaning that many fewer recruits are required than before—all of the services are finding that filling their ranks has become, in the favored Pentagon euphemism, "a challenge." Last year, the Navy fell 7,000 recruits short of its total requirement. This year, both the Army and the Air Force will fail to meet their recruiting goals, despite loosened standards and the hasty assignment of additional recruiters to the field. Attracting officer candidates is likewise becoming more difficult. Enrollment in ROTC programs—the principal source of new ensigns and second lieutenants—is 8 to 10 percent short of requirements.

Compounding the recruiting problem is the increasing tendency of expensively trained personnel to bail out at the first opportunity. In 1998, Army and Air Force reenlistment rates dropped. In the Air Force and the Navy, aviators and aviation technicians are opting for civilian life at higher than expected rates. The Air Force projects that, by 2003, it will be short 2,000 pilots—no small matter for a nation that relies heavily on air power to accomplish its goals.

The essence of the problem is that fewer and fewer Americans are willing to serve in uniform. Since 1975, in what it calls its Youth Attitude Tracking Survey, the Pentagon has charted the "propensity" of young Americans to enlist in either active-duty or reserve forces. Since 1989, the year that Reagan left office, the figures have fallen off, for some demographic groups drastically. Since the Persian Gulf War, among all 16-to-21-year-old men, the propensity to enlist has declined from 34 percent to 26 percent. For African-American men—the lifeblood of the all-volunteer force—that propensity dropped from 54 percent in 1989 to 30 percent in 1998. During the years of the drawdown, this decline seemed inconsequential because, as secretary of defense William Cohen notes in his annual report for 1999, "a sufficient number of young men were interested in the military to allow the Services to meet reduced recruiting goals." Today, with the drawdown complete and annual recruiting requirements therefore increasing (up 5 percent since 1998 to a total of approximately 200,000), "that is no longer true."

To put it bluntly, the all-volunteer force is running out of volunteers.

In the Defense Department—an institution that talks strategy but lives tactics—an effort is underway to "manage"

Reagan's supreme achievement, apart from winning the Cold War, was to preside over a revival of U.S. military power.

this problem. Determined always to protect arrangements it has grown comfortable with, the Pentagon reacts instinctively to any threat to those arrangements by calling for more resources. About its looming crisis of recruitment and retention, it sounds a most familiar refrain: It's the economy, stupid. In other words, a booming economy offering lucrative opportunities for civilian employment makes it difficult to compete for the labor of 18- and 19-year-old high-school graduates. Why join the Army when you can make better money on the outside with a lot less hassle? The solution devised by the Pentagon and the Clinton administration is equally straightforward: better pay, improved benefits, and more advertising to market the "product"; in short, throw money at the problem.

So the latest defense budget includes a military pay hike that the administration describes as the biggest in a generation. Plans call for improving retirement benefits by restoring an earlier, more generous system. And the services recently kicked off a $268 million television-advertising campaign. Army ads update the old "Be All You Can Be" slogan by shifting the emphasis to, as a Pentagon press release puts its, "high-tech training, money for college, and enlistment bonuses." The Navy, meanwhile, has hired Spike Lee to produce a series of TV spots.

If this doesn't work, the Defense Department has a backup plan, tacitly adopted: If men won't volunteer, substitute women. Pentagon surveys indicate that the propensity of women to serve, although less than that of men, has held steady since the end of the Cold War. Women remain a relatively untapped market. They now constitute 14.1 percent of the active force, although as Secretary Cohen remarks, with evident satisfaction, "the proportion of women in the Services continues to increase." Indeed, in 1998, 18 percent of first-time enlistees on active duty and in the reserves were women. Still, as one Pentagon report observes, "women con-

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tinue to be underrepresented in the military, compared to their proportion in civilian society." To true believers in "diversity," that gap suggests a problem; to recruiters, it represents a bonanza.

Women, Cohen notes, "are more likely to mention pay as a reason for joining, and less likely to mention duty to country." Furthermore, women are more likely to cite "familial obligations" as an obstacle to military service. Yet such concerns are by no means limited to women. One unforeseen consequence of eliminating the draft has been to create a military that is married with children. Over one-half of all enlisted members today are married (not infrequently to one another). Long gone are the days of high-testosterone youngsters living out of footlockers in crowded, spartan barracks. Today's soldier

President Clinton will bequeath to his successor a nation that has shouldered quasi-imperial burdens.

typically has a spouse and kids and aspires to a middle-class lifestyle. These considerations reinforce the Pentagon's inclination to see generous compensation and a family-friendly image as keys to preserving the all-volunteer force.

If we explain recruiting and retention shortfalls in economic terms, we overlook the fact that the decline in willingness to serve predates the current boom. But there is no reason that the United States cannot, if it so chooses, purchase an extension on the life of the all-volunteer force. Americans can—to put it plainly—pay whatever it takes.

Should they decide to do so, however, they should not confuse the probable result with the all-volunteer force that existed a decade ago. Reflecting the zeitgeist of the Reagan era, the force in that earlier incarnation was, if only momentarily, an expression of national revival, embodying the collective will and commitment of the people. If popular identification with "the troops" was not fully evident while Reagan himself was in office, it became unmistakably clear during the Gulf War.

Reflecting the spirit of the Clinton era—awash in cynicism, self-indulgence, and venality—a new all-volunteer force would signify an abdication of collective responsibility. Military service—bombing Belgrade, invading Haiti, keeping a watchful eye on Saddam Hussein—would become what "they" do while "we" simply foot the bill.

If Americans attempt to outsource post–Cold War national security the way corporations outsource after-hours office cleanup, they will do so at their peril. For the all-volunteer force that they will buy—increasingly female, encumbered with children, motivated by material considerations, and either ignored or taken for granted by the rest of society—will be ill suited to U.S. security requirements and positively poisonous for American democracy. The crisis confronting the all-volunteer force demands not quick fixes but a closer examination of the changing climate of civil–military relations threatening its survival.

A decade after Reagan, it is the legacy of Bill Clinton that matters. Clinton will bequeath to his successor a nation that has shouldered quasi-imperial burdens. As evidenced most recently by Kosovo, the responsibilities of the "indispensable nation" entail the frequent and protracted exercise of military power. The United States employs that power not to defend American shores or even to win wars, but to make and keep the peace, enforce norms of behavior, and advance the process of globalization that will, we are assured, make the world more stable, more peaceful, and more prosperous.

Paradoxically, the great global power confident of its ability to rearrange the international order has all but given up on the challenge to define its own values. This too forms part of the Clinton legacy. Apart from a ritualistic commitment to diversity, Americans find themselves increasingly without a common identity. As one result, the obligations of citizenship in the world's foremost democracy have shrunk to the vanishing point. That the state might actually command its citizens to perform military service seems preposterous.

To the Founders of this republic, the connection between freedom and the obligation of citizens to participate in the national defense was self-evident and crucial. The very "basis of our system," wrote George Washington in 1783, is that "every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a portion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defence of it." Three years later, Henry Knox warned that "to exonerate the members of the community from all personal service, is to render them incapable of the exercise and unworthy of the characters of freemen." Of course, neither Washington nor Knox contemplated the need to dispatch troops to the Balkans.

One could argue that, as a de facto imperial power, the United States today needs an imperial army. Such a force would be self-consciously professional, inured to hardship, nurturing of ancient warrior myths, and devoted to cultivating values at odds with those prevailing in the rest of society. The ethos of such a force would be irreducibly masculine and would not incline toward gentleness. Whether such a military would "look like America" would matter little, so long as it made short work of the Milosevices of the world, thereby allowing the rest of us to go happily about our business and to enjoy the fruits of international preeminence.

One could also argue that the republican tradition of the citizen-soldier should be revived. A military policy that mobilizes the strength of the people, united and armed, to defend their homeland just might stem the corruption that Washington, Knox, and others viewed as the foremost threat to freedom. But such a people's army would do less well in demonstrating America's global indispensability or in enforcing the rules of globalization.

The decision to have either an imperial army or a republican one will determine in significant measure what sort of nation we will be in the coming decades. The real problem with propping up an increasingly wobbly all-volunteer force is that efforts to do so conceal the true choices that America must sooner or later confront. The great danger is that, thanks to their growing indifference to military matters, Americans will one day wake up to realize that they have made their decision inadvertently—or that others have made it for them. **NR**

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The End of the Draft, and More

A common identity is lost.

STEPHEN E. AMBROSE

THE U.S. armed services are falling short of their recruiting goals, despite the highest pay scales ever, plus the most generous post-service benefits ever. A booming economy plays a part in this. Today, nearly all teenagers and people in their early twenties can find better jobs in civilian society than in the military, jobs with a brighter future and the opportunity to live where one wants and to work shorter, more dependable hours. As a result, many of today's recruits come from the poorer end of our society. They stay in the services longer. This tends toward a situation that Americans have long feared: a standing army that consists of enlisted men (and women) who have little stake in the society.

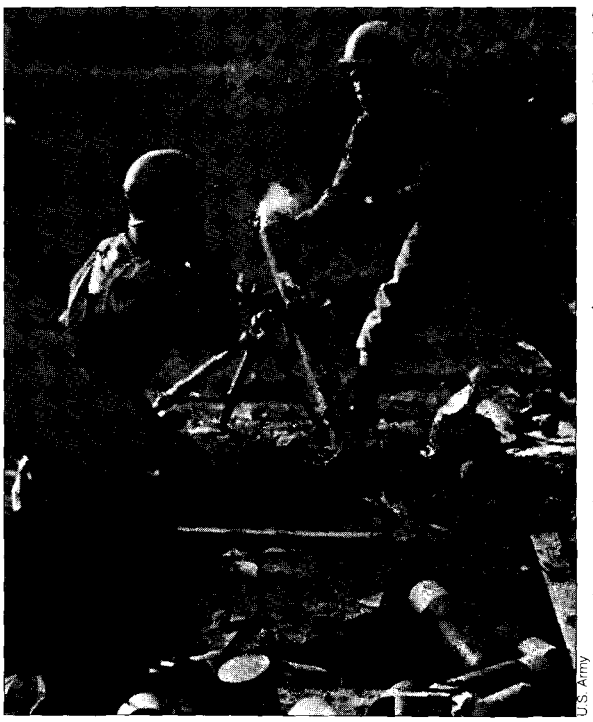
Not that there is any danger in the services' taking control of the society. No one in the officer corps has designs on the president or the congressional leadership. Most enlistees are grateful to the society for the chance to move up and learn something. The quality of the enlistee has risen steadily, and today we have the best military in our history. There are problems, of course, but the units we have in Bosnia, Kosovo, Korea, Germany, and elsewhere are the finest in the world. And they are all volunteers.

Conscription, or the draft, as it was known, started in 1940 and ended in 1973, with the conclusion of the Vietnam War. Richard Nixon was president. He had promised in the 1968 campaign that he would end the draft as soon as he ended the war, explaining that, in the future, there would be no more large conventional wars, only nuclear wars or guerrilla struggles. The first would not require big armies; the second would require special skills.

Though the end of the draft is something most Americans celebrate, it has repercussions that go beyond a standing army and need to be discussed. One is the loss of a common bond. A majority of American men over 50 did two or more years in the services. There, they were thrown in with other young people from across the nation. Lumberjacks from Oregon slept in bunks next to fishermen from Louisiana. After 1950, African-Americans were in the same squads as Italian-Americans.

Today, Cajuns from the Gulf Coast have never met a black person from Chicago. Kids from the ghetto don't know a middle-class white. Mexican-Americans have no contact with Jews. Muslim Americans have few Christian acquaintances. And so on. But during World War II and the Cold War, Americans from every group got together in the service, having a common goal—to defend their country—and, of course, a common experience. They learned together, pledged allegiance together, sweated together, hated their drill sergeants together, got drunk together, went overseas together. What they had in common—patriotism, a language, a past they could emphasize and venerate—mattered far more than what divided them.

Now, however, youngsters emphasize their entitlements—what they have coming to them, not because of something they have done but because of their skin color or religion or gender. It is difficult for them to show their patriotism in an age of international business, when their parents are asking the schools to teach them in Spanish, while they learn nothing of the history of their own country.



U.S. Army

American young people of all races and religions tell me there is no point in studying Thomas Jefferson. After all, they mouth, he had children by a slave mistress and never freed her or the children, so he can be dismissed. I tell them, Here are some of the things you owe to Jefferson: the Declaration of Independence, to start with. The Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty, which makes it possible for you to worship as you choose. The Northwest Ordinance, which guaranteed that when western territories had enough population they could enter the Union as states, with full equality. The Louisiana Purchase, which added every state west of the Mississippi and east of the Continental Divide. The acquisition of the Northwest Territory, today's Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

In this age of political correctness, the proper study of history and the reverence it brings are absent. My greatest fear about today's young people is that they grow to adulthood without the sense of a common past or a common experience. In my day, and until the early '70s, men got this in large part through the draft. It is now gone, and Nixon was surely

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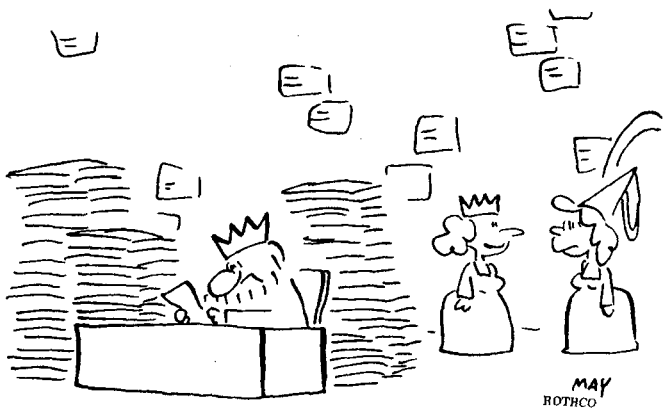
right: We no longer need a large army in which everyone physically able serves. But what we *do* need is for all of our teenagers to serve in some capacity.

This is accomplished, without great strain but with great effect, in Europe, where most youngsters on turning 18 put in a year of service to their country or community. They serve in the military, or in hospitals, or in schools; they build bridges, dams, levees—whatever. Everyone participates, both men and women. This is a wonderful way to enable Catholic Germans from Bavaria to get to know and work with Protestant Germans from eastern Germany, or to allow French kids from the Alps to unite with those from Normandy.

In our own country during the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt helped create the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was voluntary but did bring together people from all regions.

Today, mandatory service between high school and college would unite us as nothing else could. It would also help the services. Fifty-five percent of 16- to 21-year-old males say they definitely won't join the Army, while fewer than 12 percent say they definitely or probably will. The first figure is up since 1991, the second down. Women were supposed to make the all-volunteer military work, but that is not happening. Over half of the women who join fail to fulfill their contracts, despite all the military does to make service appealing to them. For example, in what may prove a disastrous move, the Army has lowered its physical standards of combat to accommodate women. Twenty percent of Army recruits are women. Catherine Aspy, a Harvard graduate who joined in 1995 because she was "very idealistic and I thought the Army would be an environment where everybody was working together for a greater good," remembers a drill sergeant yelling at his co-ed recruits, "You're all just here for the college money!" She left in 1997.

No one advocates a return to the draft. But if all high-school graduates faced a year of required service, many of them would elect to join the military for two years at a higher wage and with more to learn, and we would begin to recreate in this country what is now so sadly lacking—a sense of patriotism; a common bond. **NR**



"Well, we're in for an era of peace—that's the paperwork from the last war."

Discredited

How tax credits block tax cuts.

AMITY SHLAES

TAXATION is culture, and in the fall of 1997, eager to observe that culture at first hand, I signed up for a crash course in tax preparation at my local H & R Block in Brooklyn. As I made my way to the dusty storefront, I wondered if I had chosen *too* locally. Brooklyn today is on the upswing, but it is still a modest borough, and this was a modest corner of it. Block customers in this office are apt to be court stenographers and policemen. How complicated could their taxes be? Surely their returns were a straightforward matter of withhold-and-refund. Perhaps I should have signed up at H & R Block's Wall Street office, a place that would feature the complex code in full flower, complete with the exotic write-offs that were once the subject of *New Yorker* cartoons.

I needn't have worried. Even in the off season, the Brooklyn office gave off the unmistakable hum of commerce. The place was filled with customers. Taxes were clearly an intricate and earnest business in this part of the world, a fact that my also-earnest teacher confirmed at one of our first classes. Taxes were complicated, she told us—"I won't even tie up your brains with how complicated." But she made one thing clear: The device to be understood was the tax credit. For any taxpayer who could claim credits, particularly a species known as the Earned Income Credit, "there is money to be made"—often thousands of dollars. In a poster that hung on the wall, my teacher's employer made a similar assertion: Under the image of a young man standing beside a car—presumably purchased with money generated by a tax credit—were the words, "Thanks, H & R Block."

"Thanks, GOP," the poster may just as well have read. For it is indeed thanks to the Republicans' 15-year-long romance with the tax credit that municipal employees and busboys now display the sort of preoccupation with taxes formerly to be found only among the cocktail-shaker set. Gone is the old advocacy of the elite deduction, whose value is highest to the classic Republican constituency. In its place is the credit, structured to provide maximum benefit to the lower or middle earner. Year after year, in the name of winning the support of the factory worker or the much-craved "soccer mom," Republicans have hawked the Earned Income Credit, the dependent-care credit, the child credit, etc. When they

Miss Shlaes is a member of the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial board and the author of *The Greedy Hand: How Taxes Drive Americans Crazy and What to Do About It.*

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haven't taken the lead in credit legislation, Republicans have as often as not joined Democrats in pushing it. And nearly every one of these new credits is phased out at higher income levels, which makes them of absolutely no use to bigger earners.

This is a policy that has its costs, costs that are proving all too visible as Republican majorities in Congress struggle to pass a tax-cut package this summer. Creditmania has combined with progressivity, the other looming feature of our tax law, to generate a new and powerful division between the wealthy on the one side and middle and lower earners on the other. Today the wealthy are taxed extraordinarily heavily: Households earning more than $200,000—a group that takes in just 2 percent of the income in this country—carry a full 40 percent of the tax load. Owing in good measure to credits, earners at the other end, particularly those households under the $40,000 line, pay very little tax indeed. According to the House Ways and Means Committee, a full 48 million people—something like 35 percent of the taxpaying public—pay no income tax at all. As a result, any call for meaningful tax cuts, such as reductions in top marginal rates, makes the ugly charge that Republicans are rewarding the rich more accurate than ever.

This is ironic, given that Republicans agreed to credits in the first place precisely to protect the marginal-rate cuts, which were far more significant. Take the Earned Income Credit, brightest star in the tax-credit firmament. It was born in the 1970s, when Republicans were hoping to cut income taxes but instead found themselves fighting off plans to increase welfare and hike the minimum wage. In search of a method to encourage low-earning parents to work and stay off the dole, they came up with the EIC, a credit for any low earner with children. The EIC's charm lay in the fact that it went beyond traditional credits, which offset any taxes owed, producing a tax bill of $0. The EIC was that rare thing in the tax world—a genuine rebate. If a taxpayer's EIC was $200 and his tax liability was only $100, he actually got back $100. This remarkable gift seemed especially important in a period when lower earners were paying the highest Social Security taxes in history. Conservatives backed the EIC because they felt comfortable with its pedigree: It was a cousin of an idea put forward by Milton Friedman, the negative income tax.

In the grueling 1986 battle to roll back the top marginal rate to 28 percent, the Republicans therefore found themselves again deploying the EIC. They knew that their dramatic top-rate cut stood a chance of passing only if they also gave something to lower earners. (In tax lingo, this is known as being "distributionally neutral.") As a result, a large expansion of the EIC came to be included in the 1986 law, the average credit per low-earning family rising from $281 to $450.

In 1990, again with Republican support, the EIC got even bigger, this time rising to $813 per family. By 1993, however,

John Breck

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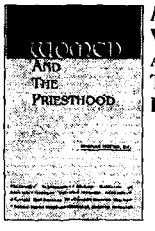

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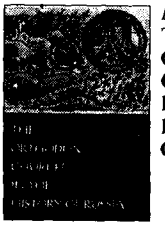

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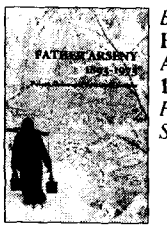

Bouteneff, trans.
FATHER ARSENY, 1893-1973
Priest, Prisoner, Spiritual Father
279 pp., $12.95

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Republicans were protesting the credit—they fought it along with President Clinton's fresh rate hike for higher earners. But the other party also had learned the value of the credit, and New Democrats, who preferred the EIC to welfare, ensured that 1993 saw its biggest increase ever. By 1999, the little glint in nerdy free marketeers' eyes had morphed into the Credit that Ate America: Some 20 million families fill out pages of extra forms ("If the child was born before 1979 AND was under age 24 at the end of 1997 and a student, check the 'Yes' box") to claim the EIC, valued at an average of $1,516—or more than enough to finance, in these times of easy money,

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The most important losers are those who *aspire* to earn more, who are constantly tamped down.

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the car that Block advertises. As a Block teacher said of the EIC, "People come in just for this."

Then there is the child credit, darling of younger Republicans. In the gloomy downsizing mode of the early 1990s, Republicans told themselves they couldn't lobby for cuts in marginal rates without also appeasing lower earners and soccer moms. Enter the child credit, which duly became the centerpiece of 1994's Contract with America. This credit is an expensive item: By 1999, it cost the government $22 billion, only $7 billion less than the much older EIC. Worth $500 a child this year, the credit is unavailable to families earning over $120,000. Like the EIC, it creates an incentive to claim children on the tax return, so much so that my Block teachers feared the credit would generate considerable fraud. As one Block sermonizer correctly warned, the onus was on us, the preparers, to police our customers and ensure that every one of them who claimed children actually could produce documentation to prove it: "You don't have a Social Security number, you don't have a child."

Meanwhile, the White House has been plying its own targeted credits. One is the "HOPE credit," which the legacy-minded Clinton named after his hometown. The administration's credit zeal has been so unrelenting that it has become the topic of humor within the Treasury Department. Earlier this year, the scholarly journal *Tax Notes* published a copy of a spoof memo, apparently circulated by frustrated Treasury economists. The memo announced the creation of yet another credit, the "None of the Above Credit," specially designed for "taxpayers who are not eligible for any of the existing tax credits." "The proposed tax credit," the spoofsters said, "is carefully targeted at that underserved group, and has been found to be popular in focus groups."

Within the Republican party, there has been significant disillusionment. The wealthy and the very wealthy—while few in number next to the great untaxed masses—do vote, and taxes do matter to them. My own newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, noted that many voters earning more than $75,000 a year—in other words, "the rich," in a Democrat's lexicon—turned away from the party in last fall's elections, supporting the GOP by 53 percent, compared with 62 percent as recently as in 1994. Among voters earning over $100,000—plutocrats!—the drop was just as serious.

Even so, because of the distribution tables the credits have helped to create, finding voters who are interested in serious reform is becoming increasingly difficult. Back in the 1980s, the last time Republicans made true headway with tax reform, many millions of Americans paid federal taxes at 30 percent, 40 percent, even 50 percent. Today, a measly 500,000 households are subject to the top 39.6 percent rate; at the same time, fewer low earners pay taxes than did so at the beginning of the Reagan years.

Once you take in the whole picture, you understand why, despite the projected surplus, Chairman Bill Archer of Ways and Means has to screw up his courage to talk about lowering marginal rates, and why Dick Armey's flat-tax trumpet doesn't sound as loudly as it once did. The credit problem also helps explain why George W. Bush has not yet come forward with a specific plan to cut the top marginal rate, and why the papers report that he will combine any marginal-rate cut with yet another giveback for lower earners. It tells us why Steve Forbes, for all his strengths, faces such an uphill battle: The sheer math of budgeting means that any substantial reduction in marginal rates may end up hurting that great new constituency—the heavily credited, the untaxed.

The rich and the Republican party are not the most important losers here. The most important losers are those who *aspire* to earn more, who are constantly tamped down. Almost every tax credit is phased out at higher income levels. The powerful EIC, for example, disappears at around $30,000 in earnings. And when credits disappear, they punish workers by increasing their marginal tax rates—the rates of tax they pay on the last dollar they earn. Gary and Aldona Robbins, tax scholars at the Institute for Policy Innovation, calculated that the number of filing families whose top marginal tax rate *increases* because of credit phaseouts is 11.7 million, compared with only 4.4 million whose marginal rate is lowered by the gizmo. In other words, the credit actually does the opposite of what its incentive-oriented creators intended: It discourages low earners from earning more. These earners' best strategy, by default, becomes figuring out a way to keep the credits rolling—to work the tax structure to their advantage. No wonder that other forms of economic activity pale when set beside the attractions of collecting credits. And no wonder tax professionals have prospered so in recent years.

All this was clear as blue heaven at H & R Block, where teachers tried hard to encourage tax-school graduates to join their staff. When not everyone signed up, they were incredulous. After all, as one staffer asked, who in his right mind would forgo the chance to legally and legitimately play the tax game? What better use of our time than deploying our new knowledge to gobble up slices of the credit pie, if not for ourselves then for our customers? The teacher spoke to her students, but she might as well have been speaking to the whole nation: "You are a tax preparer now." **NR**

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The Court's Mr. Right

Clarence Thomas makes his mark.

DANIEL E. TROY

In late May, the *Washington Post* carried a front-page story headed "After a Quiet Spell, Justice Finds Voice; Conservative Thomas Emerges from the Shadow of Scalia." Joan Biskupic, the *Post*'s Court-watcher, contended that "increasingly, Thomas has been breaking from Scalia, taking pains to elaborate his own views and securing his position as the most conservative justice on the court." It's true that during the recently concluded Supreme Court term, Clarence Thomas bolstered his standing as the Court's greatest champion of the belief that the Constitution should be interpreted according to the original understanding of its text. Many conservative legal analysts who once turned directly to the opinions of Justice Antonin Scalia to find out the "right" answer now go straight to Thomas.

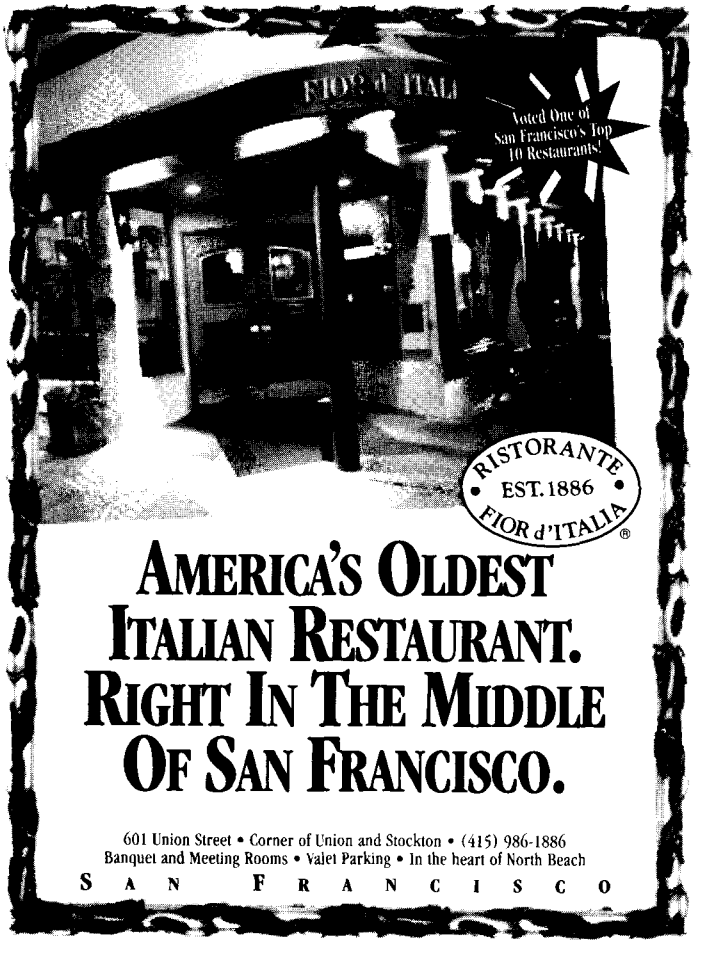
But that's been true for years. Contrary to the *Post*'s suggestion, Thomas was never a "clone" or "puppet" of the "forceful, fiery-tempered Scalia." He was never Scalia's "shadow." So Scott Gerber demonstrates in *First Principles: The Jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas*, an excellent and balanced review of the justice's first five years on the Court. During those five years, Thomas and Scalia voted together 80 percent of the time. But Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, President Clinton's appointees, voted with Justice David Souter (the Court's most liberal member) 84 and 80 percent of the time, and nobody ever called them Souter clones.

It would not be unusual for a judge to have gained confidence over his years on the bench. But Thomas had an unusually strong start. Even during his "acclimation period," Gerber observes, "senior members of the Rehnquist Court did not appear reluctant to assign Justice Thomas the opinion for the Court," including assignments in important cases. Gerber also shows that Thomas was unafraid to speak out on significant issues. As he concludes, "Thomas is *not* simply . . . Scalia's loyal apprentice—no matter how vociferously some seek to establish and maintain this myth. Justice Thomas is *his own* man, with *his own* jurisprudence."

Thomas and Scalia did indeed disagree in more high-profile cases than usual during the last term. But the explanation may be simply that the term presented more cases in which Thomas's views differed from Scalia's. As Gerber says, Scalia increasingly resorts to "some sort of Burkean 'conventionalism' in which the meaning of a particular provision of the Constitution is defined by the consensus view of the existing political community." From his earliest days on the Court, Thomas has focused more on the original meaning of the constitutional text and has thus been more willing to overturn precedents he considers inconsistent with it—even if the line of cases he is opposing goes back to previous centuries. His approach is therefore more likely than Scalia's to win applause from those who believe that the modern Supreme Court has gone dramatically off track, though both approaches have conservative adherents.

One case that made the *Post* take notice of the Scalia–Thomas divide was *Saenz* v. *Roe*. At issue was whether California could try to stop being a "welfare magnet." The state wanted to limit recent emigrants from other states to the same level of benefits they received in their old homes rather than pay them California's more generous benefits. The Supreme Court, by a vote of 7–2, held that such discrimination violates the "right to travel," which partially rested on the Fourteenth Amendment's declaration that "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." Thomas dissented, denying that welfare is a "privilege" of California citizens.

Mr. Troy practices constitutional law in Washington, D.C., and is an associate scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the author of *Retroactive Legislation*.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But he did not stop there. He charged that an earlier Court had "all but read the Privileges and Immunities Clause out of the Constitution" in the *Slaughter-House Cases* of 1873. As a result, later Courts have tried to read some of that clause's substance back in through dubious interpretations of the other clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment (the equal-protection and due-process clauses)—a tactic that has enabled the Court to reach many liberal policy outcomes that were not really entailed by the amendment at all. In the California case, wrote Thomas, the Court appeared to "breathe new life into the [Privileges and Immunities] Clause," but without addressing its "historical underpinnings or its place in our constitutional jurisprudence." Thomas then extended an offer that, if accepted, would radically reshape constitutional law:

> Because I believe that the demise of the Privileges or Immunities Clause has contributed in no small part to the current disarray of our Fourteenth Amendment jurisprudence, I would be open to reevaluating its meaning in an appropriate case. Before invoking the Clause, however, we should endeavor to understand what the Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment thought that it meant. We should also consider whether the Clause should displace, rather than augment, portions of our equal protection clause and substantive due process jurisprudence.

To the surprise and mild chagrin of many conservative Court-watchers, Scalia joined the majority without comment.

In another case this past term, *Mitchell* v. *United States*, Thomas again showed greater boldness than Scalia, calling for a fundamental re-evaluation of the Court's approach to the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Both justices challenged the Court's 1965 holding that a jury may not interpret a defendant's refusal to testify as an indication of guilt. But while Scalia argued only that the Court should not extend that interpretation (to prohibiting judges from considering a defendant's refusal to testify in setting punishments), Thomas was willing to take the next step of urging the abandonment of the 1965 ruling altogether.

This willingness to challenge well-established precedent is a Thomas trademark. In 1998, Thomas alone was willing to reconsider a 1798 decision that applied the Constitution's bar on ex post facto laws to criminal laws only—a decision that opened the door to retroactive tax increases and retroactive impositions of civil liability (as in the Superfund law). Overturning it would be in keeping with the Framers' concern about the government's ability to upset settled expectations with regard to property rights, and thus might also lead to a rethinking of the purpose of the Constitution's ban on uncompensated takings and its prohibition on the impairment by states of the obligation of contracts.

Thomas's openness to reconsidering precedent has important jurisprudential implications. For example, it has enabled him to be among the most ardent advocates of free-speech

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Thomas's openness to reconsidering precedent has enabled him to be among the Court's most ardent advocates of free-speech rights.

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rights on the Court, often surpassing Scalia. To illustrate, this past term Thomas reaffirmed his commitment to the view that advertising, which the Supreme Court calls "commercial speech," should not be treated, as it is now, as the poor stepsister of political, artistic, and scientific speech. This builds on a 1996 case in which Thomas, citing historical sources concerning the Framers' worldview and the drafting of the First Amendment, concluded that there is "no philosophical or historical basis for asserting that 'commercial' speech is of 'lower value' than 'noncommercial speech.'" Thomas is, accordingly, now the Court's strongest advocate of the right to advertise.

For his part, Scalia said in 1996 that he "shared Justice Thomas's discomfort" with the Court's approach of "balancing" the government's interests against those of the speaker. But Scalia wanted to know more than Thomas. For example, Scalia wanted to look into the state laws governing advertising during the 1790s and 1860s when the First and Fourteenth Amendments were ratified. Scalia also wanted to know about "any national consensus that had formed regarding state regulation of advertising after the Fourteenth Amendment and before this Court's entry into the field." This kind of inquiry, in support of the "Burkean conventionalism" Gerber identified, seems of little interest to Thomas.

United States Supreme Court

In most cases, Thomas and Scalia have voted the same way, even when their reasoning has differed. The tension between originalism and conventionalism, however, caused them to split on 1995's *McIntyre* v. *Ohio Elections Commission*, with Thomas supporting the view that the First Amendment protects anonymous political leafleting. Distancing himself from the majority's precedent-driven approach, Thomas examined

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such evidence as the fact that the *Federalist Papers* were published under the pseudonym "Publius." He concluded that "the Framers in 1791 believed anonymous speech sufficiently valuable to deserve the protection of the Bill of Rights."

Disagreeing, Scalia argued that the prevalence of anonymous electioneering at the time of the First Amendment's ratification did not mean that the Constitution guaranteed the right to do so. He pointed to the "widespread and long-standing traditions of our people" manifested in a "governmental practice that has become general throughout the United States" banning anonymous electioneering. The split over *McIntyre* highlights a facet of Thomas's thought that helps to explain his greater openness to overturning precedents: He seems more convinced than Scalia that history can settle the meaning of the Constitution's text.

Of course, such divisions can easily be overstated. Perhaps no other pair of justices shares a common vision to the extent that Thomas and Scalia do. Nor are we to conclude that Thomas is always right, even from a conservative perspective. As the Scalia–Thomas divide illustrates, even like-minded judicial conservatives can have dramatic differences of opinion about how to interpret the Constitution, and particularly about when to adhere to precedent. Moreover, Thomas is not always more "conservative" than Scalia. To take just one example, Scalia has radically reshaped the way statutes are interpreted by stressing the value of the plain meaning of a law and the unreliability of certain legislative materials, such as committee reports. Many legal conservatives agree with Scalia. Yet Scalia continues to be the lone justice refusing to join even a portion of any Supreme Court opinion that relies on such legislative materials.

The divisions that do exist between Scalia and Thomas are a matter of temperament as well as philosophy. Scalia is rumored to be thinking of retirement sometime during the next president's term, owing to his frustration with the Court. Given the fragility of the moderately conservative current 5–4 majority, a Democratically appointed replacement for Chief Justice Rehnquist or Sandra Day O'Connor would cast the 63-year-old Scalia into the minority for the rest of his career, a prospect he could hardly relish. By contrast, at 51, Thomas is young enough to outlast a new liberal majority. He seems to be in for the long haul.

Scott Gerber writes that, from 1991 to 1995, "in the aggregate, Justice Thomas was the most conservative Rehnquist Court justice." Thomas's performance this past term—particularly in *Saenz* v. *Roe*—confirms that judgment. One can only hope that the combination of the 1999 term, Gerber's book, and the growing distance from the horrible battle over Thomas's confirmation will engender more appreciation for Thomas's bold and conservative contributions to the law. **NR**

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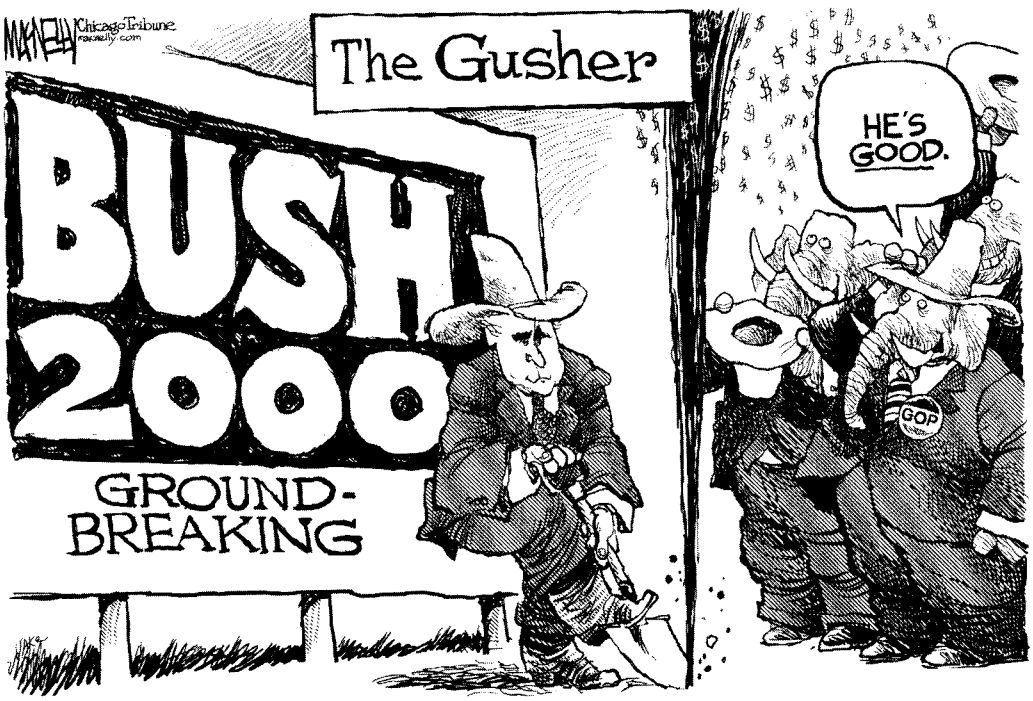

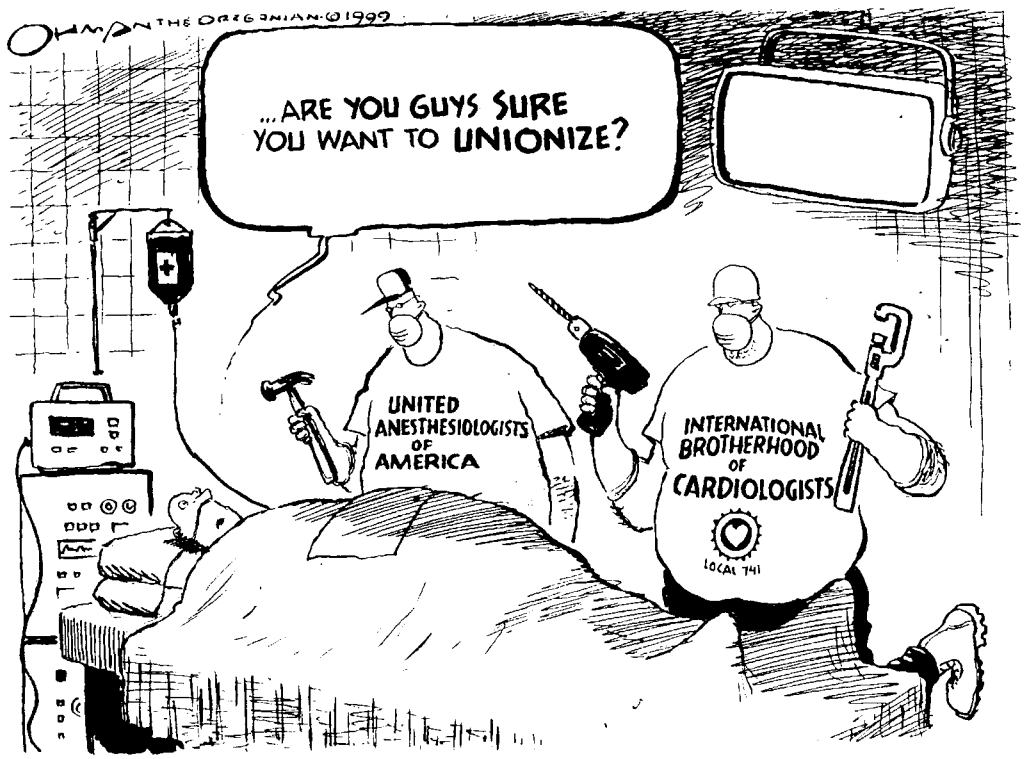
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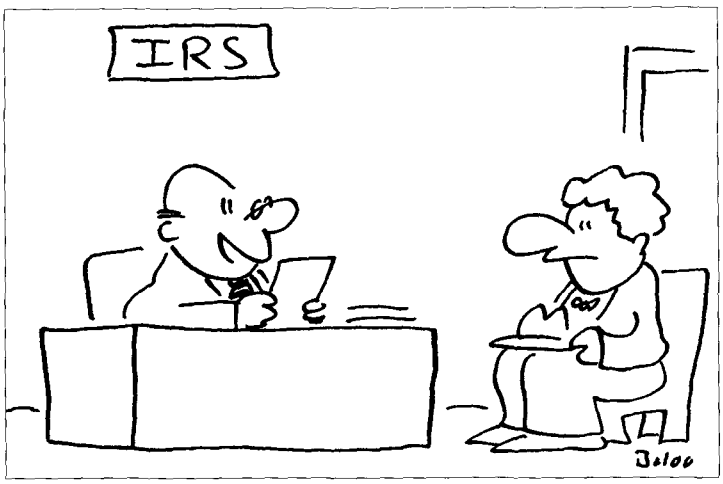
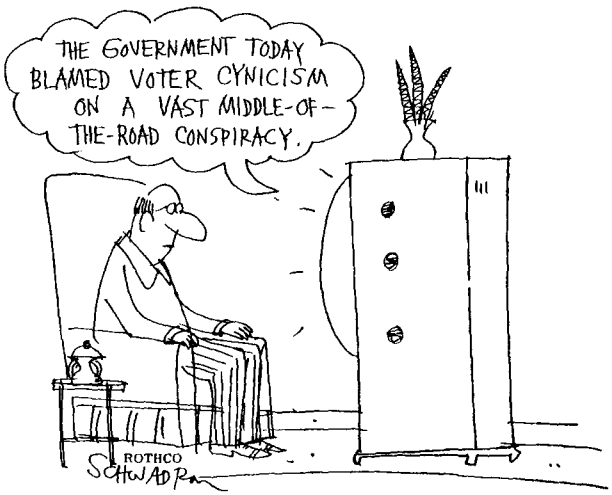
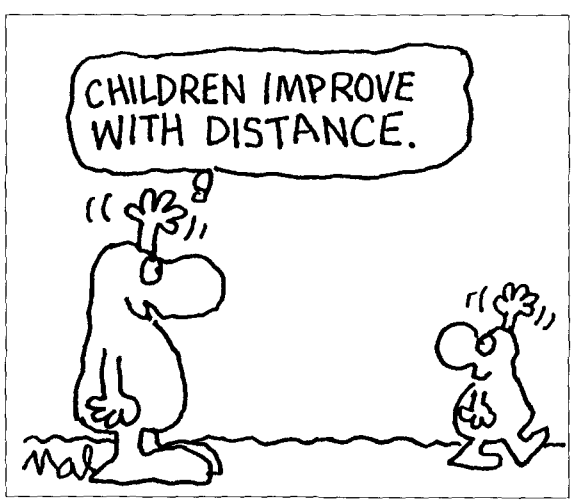
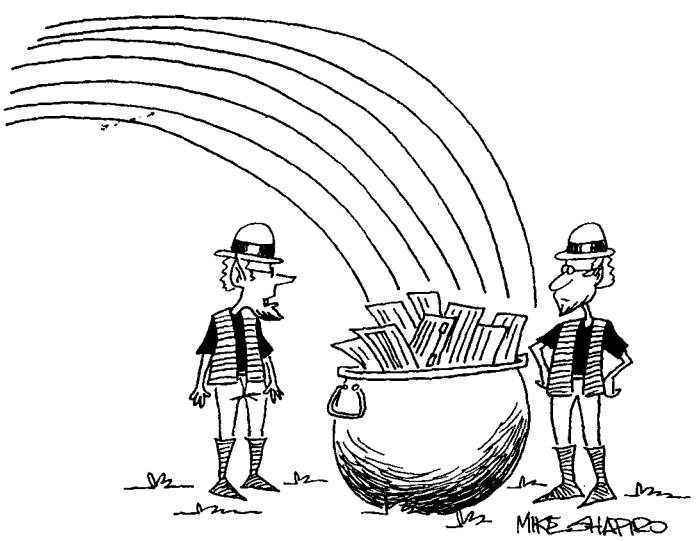


"Now, then—Would you like a dollar of your taxes to go toward spin control?"







"Whose idea was it to cash in the gold for the Internet stocks?"

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Dear [insert name]:

First, I want to congratulate you on the fine work you do for [insert name of newspaper and/or newsmagazine]. I've seen your byline many times, and each time I've found your work informative and insightful.

I'll get to the point: I need your help. As you know, I'm running a grassroots campaign for the presidency. And while positive press coverage is always welcome, it's hard to run without financial backing. (Of course, I find this whole system distasteful and undignified, and if elected, I'll change the rules entirely.)

Please send whatever you feel is appropriate to whatever address you feel is appropriate. I don't want to insult either one of us by naming a figure.

On second thought, don't send anything. Ignore this letter.

Sincerely,

Sen. Bill Bradley

Dear Public Broadcasting Supporter:

You and I have a lot in common. We both support public television. We both care about children. We both love Jim Lehrer. And we both want to keep the far-right wing of the Republican party out of power!

That's why the nice folks at [insert name of local PBS affiliate] graciously gave me your name and address. Because they too care about the things we care about.

And because Big Bird will be an endangered species if the far-right wing has its way!

Please, give what you can! Together, you and I can keep America moving on the right track.

What street takes you to the bridge that takes you to the new millennium? *Sesame Street*!

Al Gore

P.S.: Of course, it goes without saying that I find President Clinton's behavior troubling, not to say repugnant. And also inexcusable. He's been a great president. I'm proud to have served him. His behavior was unacceptable.

Dear [Insert name of $500K+ donor]:

Everything's big in Texas. We've got big mountains to climb, big hair on our ladies, big steaks on our plates, and big checks from our friends.

But sometimes "big" isn't "big enough."

That's where *you* come in, friend.

I'll put it simple, the Texas way: I need your big money. I need it now and I need it big.

Let's go for it! Together!

George W. Bush

Dear Fellow Conservative:

While I appreciate your recent donation of 10,000 cans of tuna, 4,000 jugs of potable water, and a barrel of kerosene, I must admit that actual currency would have been more useful.

Of course, I too share your belief that that Federal Reserve has no constitutional right to regulate the currency (nor, for that matter, does the Treasury Department), and yet, for the various things that come up during a presidential campaign—banners, balloons, stickers, and whatnot—cash money is the preferred method of payment. It is simply impossible to pay the Kinko's bill in Derry, New Hampshire, with canned meat.

Is there any way you could send cash?

Thanks!

Senator Bob Smith

Dear Kip:

I'm doing a direct-mail drop at the end of the week and I have to run the commercial in California, so please sell the big purple Fabergé egg with the twisty gold bits around the top and send the money to me.

Steve

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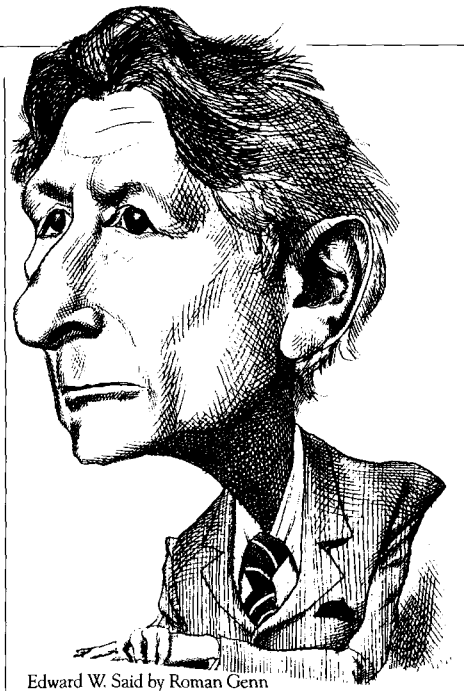
'Corruption of the Best'

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Out of Place: A Memoir, by Edward W. Said (Knopf, 352 pp., $26.95)


Edward W. Said by Roman Genn

EDWARD SAID is one of our most celebrated and public intellectuals. His gifts are huge, his reading very wide indeed, and he has a turbulent prose style all his own. A professor of literature at Columbia University, he has long been able to command whatever platform he likes. Of Christian Arab—or, to be secular about it, Levantine—origins, he happens to be the son of a man who had taken out American citizenship as long ago as the First World War. A cosmopolitan at home in East and West alike, he was in an almost unique position to elucidate and bridge both cultures.

In general, he seems to subscribe to the humanist belief that values are universal. Yet in particular, he argues with all the force and passion at his disposal for the divisive "Them" and "Us" approach that calls for different moral standards for different people. "Them" in his view is the United States—and by extension Israel and any other ally—seen as imperialist, war-mongering, triumphalist, even racist. "Us" is the Arab world, Islam, and by extension the Third World, seen as victimized, despised, and to be justified no matter what policies or customs are practiced in those societies. What might have been a brilliant life's work has instead petered out into cause-mongering, which only adds to present violence and hate. *Corruptio optimi pessima*, as the churchmen used to put it—the worst thing of all is the corruption of the best.

Christian Arabs are a minority community in the Middle East, in the predicament of sharing the majority's ethnic identity but not its religion, Islam. To many, the West offered protection, first from Arab nationalism and later from Islamic fundamentalism, and they opted for emigration. Others, on the contrary, supposed that if they threw themselves into the region's new political movements, for instance Baathism and Communism, they might pass as assimilated in the eyes of the majority. In the old Soviet Union, a comparable illusion led Jews in disproportionate numbers to join the Communist Party.

Said himself was born in Jerusalem in 1935, towards the ignominious end of the British Mandate in Palestine. His parents, he says, disliked that foreboding city. Increasingly successful in spite of a breakdown in health, his father ran a large stationery business in Cairo, and the family moved there in 1947, shortly before the Arab–Israeli fighting to come. The young Said developed his lifelong taste for literature and music. But a huge break occurred as he was growing up, when in the early '50s, and in the name of nationalism, Gamal Abdel Nasser introduced his version of a Soviet police state in Egypt. At one time, the Soviet Union appeared likely to replace the British in the Middle East, and might well have done so had it not been for the determination of the United States to resist any such outcome.

In *Out of Place*, his memoir, Said skimps on the enthusiasm that he has steadily shown for Nasser and Arab nationalism. Never a Soviet apologist in the classic mode, he nonetheless came to support some of the more fanciful Soviet claims. The Soviet Union and its local clients were promising liberation and democracy and progress, therefore the United States by definition was criminally retrograde in opposing it. "Them" and "Us," writ in capital letters during the Cold War, was a crude mutation of the basic Marxist dogma that class struggle is the engine of history. At this point, Said seems to have been much influenced by fashionable deconstructionists and revolutionaries such as Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon. In such eyes, that same Marxist dogma justified the use of force on the grounds that it brought victory.

For years now, Said has been polemicizing against America and its policies, accusing it in the usual Orwellian inversion of the very exploitation and imperialism that in fact it set itself against. In several books, most notably *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), he indicted the entire West for its dealings over centuries with the Arab world and Islam. All Westerners who ever studied or wrote about Arab society or Islam, according to Said, were "Orientalists," a new coinage for "Them," extending their imperial power over the hapless "Us."

"Orientalist" is only a fictitious categorization of diverse people, another organizing term in the Marxist vocabulary, on the level of "capitalist lackey," say, or "running-dog." To Said, though, explorers and artists, linguists, epigraphists, folklorists, even converts to Islam, from whatever background and country, were all expressing the power of

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"Them" over "Us." Any Westerner who made a critique of what he found was an imperialist outright. Admirers were condescending from a position of strength. The neutral and scholarly only served the status quo, in which the West already had the advantage. Jane Austen, Verdi, and Dickens were among the many who had no idea that their work was spreading innate assumptions of Western superiority. As always with Marxist theory, the argument is circular, all of it assertion that can neither be proved nor refuted.

■

For Said, it has always been 'Them' versus 'Us,' with different moral standards for different people.

■

Israel, from the Soviet perspective, was a settler-colony, a projection of American imperialism with no right to exist and no will of its own. In pursuit of its great-power ambitions, the Soviet Union duly sponsored and armed what had previously been the Nasser-inspired Palestine Liberation Organization, thus helping to manipulate the cycles of Arab and Israeli warfare. An honored member of the Palestine National Council, Said lost no occasion to vilify Israel for real or perceived misdeeds. To his credit, he was able to acknowledge the historic reasons that Israelis had sought refuge in a land of their own, but he then would not draw the logical conclusions, instead coming down time and again on the side of the armed struggle of "Us" against this subset of "Them." Rejecting absolutely what in another context he has called the "uninteresting assertions of minor ethnic or group particularity," he was unremittingly tribal when it came to Israel and Palestine. He went so far as to justify the murder by the PLO of Palestinians accused of collaboration with Israel. Rejecting the Oslo agreements as a "Palestinian Treaty of Versailles," he broke with Yasser Arafat. Instead of legitimizing peace in the name of a shared humanity, his authority was at the service of yet more conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

The more aggressive his polemics, the more he has been lionized, for instance invited to give the Gauss lectures at Princeton and the Reith lectures in London. This prestige is intimately connected to the self-hatred common to so many intellectuals in the West, and it goes to the heart of Marxist attitudinizing among them. Said has been attacking the very institutions and values that allow him and them their freedom and fame. From the haven of New York, he has encouraged Palestinians to go and risk their lives against Israel. To point out such things provokes a barrage of enraged letters in defense of Said from academics for whom fashion counts more than responsibility and moral judgment.

A number of Arab critics such as Nadim al-Bitar and Fouad Ajami insist on calling intellectual treason by its proper name. The Syrian philosopher Sadiq al-Azm demolished "Orientalism" as a concept too reductive to be meaningful. Seemingly out of animus against America, Said was prepared to welcome the arrival of the Ayatollah Khomeini and Shia fundamentalism, and he still criticizes American policy against Saddam Hussein. Kenan Makiya, an Iraqi, took him to task for whitewashing Saddam's brutalities. As a protection against Saddam's reprisals, Makiya had used the pseudonym of Samir al-Khalil. By way of reply, Said accused Makiya of being "thuggish" and a Mossad agent under the pseudonym.

At the outset of his memoir, Said says that for some years he has been suffering from a severe form of leukemia, and this condition understandably casts a frightening shadow. By his own account, and as his title suggests, he has always been diffident. Page after page speaks of gloom and dread and a "deep sense of generalized fear." A good boy, a good student, he seemed to his parents and others to have a "radically naughty self." Hilda, his mother, deployed love as a weapon. Wadie, his father, known to his friends as William, dealt with feelings much as he did with any other business. Doing the right thing by his lights, he habitually asked too much of his son. The portrait of this overpowering pair is complex and moving, in a very different style from the polemics.

At British or American schools in Jerusalem and then in Cairo, Said suffered the difficulties of identity that stemmed from his birthright. Edward sounded unlike an Arab first name, and Said equally unlike a Western surname. The family moved among people like themselves, Christian Arabs, Armenians, Jews, Greeks, rich in money and even richer in the variety of their lives. Family and friends would spend every summer in a village in the Lebanese mountains. Afterwards there was the annual trip to Europe and America. With insight and melancholy, Said evokes this life now lost without trace.

Israel had indeed taken away his Palestine. Then Nasser and Arab nationalism took away the tolerant Levantine alternative. Further, deeper wounds were all too likely. To be rid of the sense of vulnerability, he had to celebrate the very nationalism that destroyed the delicate social base on which he himself stood. Completing his education in America in blinkered schools including Princeton, he drew a line at last. Firsthand experience of "Them" finalized his identity as "Us." This may have felt like solidarity combined with safety—getting the best of East and West—but it was the most serious loss of all, the loss of the chance to become the great man he could have been. **NR**

Curtains

DONALD LYONS

Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Then and Now, by Mark Steyn (Routledge, 352 pp., $27)

THE Broadway musical in its prime is now routinely accepted as one of the great American cultural achievements. Like Elizabethan drama and Hollywood film of the 1930s and '40s, it marked a happy confluence of popular taste and sophisticated craftsmanship. The Golden Age of the musical and of popular song was a time when new ethnic groups—indeed a whole nation—were bursting with vitality, when musical traditions like operetta and revue were ripe for new shapes, and when a language (demotic American) was being used with freshness, sass, and

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emotional power. That period extended for roughly three decades, from 1927, the year of the Kern-Hammerstein epic *Showboat*, until the late 1950s, when *West Side Story* (1957) and *Gypsy* (1959) brought the form to the edges of its possibilities, expressing as they did the forces of societal, familial, and psychic disintegration that were soon to tear apart what had been a relatively homogeneous culture. As Hegel wrote (it was in *The Pajama Game*, I believe), the owl of Minerva takes flight only at dusk. He meant that wise and witty appreciation of a phenomenon often signifies that the subject is dead as a Rialto turkey. In *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Then and Now*, critic and commentator Mark Steyn attempts an autopsy of the genre. Peppered with puns, wisecracks, anecdotes, and interviews, the book does not pretend to be a history; it's a series of freeze-frame slides taken from a spy satellite.

■

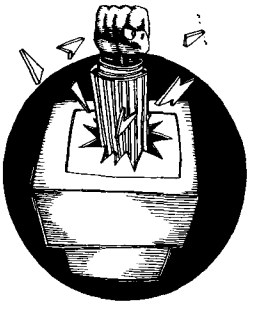
Rodgers and Hammerstein, cracks Mark Steyn, replaced 'him-and-her romance' with 'hymns and hearses.'

■

The first half of the book, called "Act One," anatomizes the aspects of good (and bad) old musicals synchronically and impressionistically. Topics include music, lyrics, books, openings, Jews, and hit tunes. Steyn is at his best showing how lyrics evolved from the "light verse [in] fixed, formal, measured musical pattern" that characterized Gilbert & Sullivan and early musicals like the 1905 *Miss Dolly Dollars* into the supple, tricky simplicity of Irving Caesar's "Picture you upon my knee/Tea for two and two for tea," or Lorenz Hart's "We'll have Manhattan/The Bronx and Staten . . ."

Steyn calls lyricist Dorothy Fields "the greatest woman writer of the 20th century" on the basis of seemingly simple lyrics like "Grab your coat and get your hat/Leave your worries on the doorstep." Call it hyperbole, but Steyn brings it off superbly. And he's serious when he calls the "half-century before [rock pioneer] Bill Haley . . . the best that American popular music has ever known, years which saw the rise of jazz, country, blues, good commercial film music, fine pop songs of which a few could reasonably claim to be the only true art songs in the English language . . . and an indigenous musical theatre." Not only is he serious, he's right.

Showboat was not followed by similar epic works. In fact, the '30s were a decade of wit, as epitomized in songs like Cole Porter's "Let's Do It" and musicals like *Pal Joey* by Rodgers and Hart. The patriotic '40s were a decade of heart, with Rodgers and his new partner, Hammerstein, as its poets. Steyn summarizes the objections to R&H with a crack about how they replaced "him-and-her romance" with "hymns and hearses"—i.e., noble sentiments and tragic plots—but he appreciates their founding works of the 1940s and early 1950s, from *Oklahoma* to *The King and I*. In this Golden Age, songs were written for specific characters, for Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun* or for Miss Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls* or for Mama Rose in *Gypsy*. Both "compression, the essence of the lyricist's craft," and character-specificity have been lost in the "through-sung" pop-opera scores of the present age, such as those of Andrew Lloyd Webber.



At the end of "Act One," Steyn considers the transitional figure of Stephen Sondheim, lyricist of *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* and composer-lyricist of dark, arty '70s works like *Company*, *Follies*, *Pacific Overtures*, and *Sweeney Todd*. In the latter four shows, writes Steyn, the former protégé of Oscar Hammerstein set out to repudiate his old master and demonstrate that "marriage is worthless, that all middle-aged lives are failures, that U.S. foreign policy sucks, that we're all potential Charlie Mansons." While Sondheim sought to deconstruct the old musicals' ideology, his music declined from brilliant pastiche to unsingable mess. Steyn is devastating on Sondheim's later work: "The words run away with themselves. You can't follow the meaning, you can't always catch the consonants; all you hear are the rhymes—and the author." Sondheim's career is a paradigm of the centrifugal and self-loathing trajectory of American culture in the '70s.

After "then" comes, alas, "now." "Act Two" of Steyn's book takes us on a roller-coaster ride through the musicals of the '80s and early '90s (the book was originally published in England in 1993 and shows it, as when we read that Paul Simon, who recently composed the megaflop *The Capeman*, is "lost to the theatre"). This section, also arranged by whimsical theme—for example, "The Brits," "The Fags," "The Rock," "The Flops"—turns into a survey dismaying in content and trivial in form. The name that dominates this late, weak, barbarian-threatened musical era is that of Lloyd Webber, creator of *Cats*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Sunset Boulevard*. Between Sondheim, darling of an artily misanthropic elite, and Lloyd Webber, zillionaire purveyor of smooth schmaltz, Steyn tilts toward, and writes with even a sort of reluctant warmth about, Lloyd Webber. The merits and demerits of the various Norma Desmonds in Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* are solemnly discussed.

The lightweight tone of the contemporary stuff derives from Steyn's debonair but disproportionate reliance on casual schmooze. Lines like "as Sir Andrew put it to me . . . " and "Paul Simon remarked that . . . " dot the pages, as do Steyn's putdowns of and comebacks to the mighty over dinner or drinks. It's fine, it's even fun, that Steyn swims in these waters, but this section reads too often like a collection of reheated feature pieces. And unlike such dapper, epigrammatic Broadway veterans as Jule Styne and George Abbott, who drop pearls of wisdom on earlier pages, the new guys are defensive, loquacious, and earnest, like the new musicals they create.

The book's second half might better have been replaced by a systematic and comprehensive treatment of the Golden Age. But system and thoroughness are not Steyn's virtues; if you want

Mr. Lyons is drama critic for the *New York Post* and author of *Independent Visions*, a study of independent American cinema.

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Advance praise for ***THE REDHUNTER***

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them, you can turn to a book like Ethan Mordden's *Coming Up Roses: The Broadway Musical in the 1950s*, in which a lively and opinionated chronicler takes us show by show—almost number by number—through a very rich decade. Steyn's virtues are sharpness of perception and phrase, audacity and idiosyncrasy of presentation—all grounded in a warm understanding of why great musicals were great in those bygone days when it was always "early in the morning." **NR**

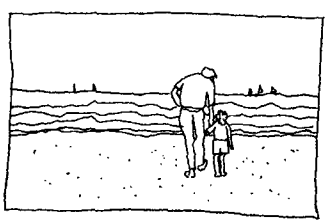
The Editor as Playboy

ADAM BELLOW

Another Life: A Memoir of Other People, by Michael Korda (Random House, 530 pp., $26.95)

FEW publishing memoirs deserve to be widely read, but Michael Korda's captivating account of his long and varied editorial career will reward those who never even glance at the spine of a book or skim an acknowledgements page.

Traditionally editors are anonymous figures, but Korda is exceptional on several counts. Other editors with literary aspirations have had to retire from publishing in order to pursue them. Such proletarian restrictions do not apply to Korda, who has not only been a hugely successful trade editor for over 40 years, but a bestselling author as well, publishing no fewer than ten books in a variety of genres. Korda is also exceptional in having spent his whole career at a single publisher, Simon & Schuster. This effective life-tenure position has provided a uniquely stable perch from which to observe the transformation of publishing during his lifetime.



Mr. Bellow, executive editor-at-large for Doubleday, is writing a book in defense of nepotism.

On one level Korda's book provides a useful history of these changes and a thoughtful assessment of their impact. Well known to insiders, they include the advent of mass-market paperbacks, public ownership of publishing companies, the rise of professional management, the displacement of editors by sales and marketing executives, the decline of independent booksellers versus chains and superstores, the increasing importance of television as the engine of mass culture, and the dawn of "celebrity" publishing.

His new book is simply a reader's delight. Korda is a first-class raconteur with a keen eye for detail, wit drier than fine sherry, and a great deal of surplus intelligence. Though not a stylist, he writes effortless, transparent prose that is pleasantly informal and intimate. Delicious and gossipy, *Another Life* reminds me of nothing so much as a thick slice of halvah—a pressed brick of sweet, crumbly dough held together by a sprinkling of pistachios.

Korda has already chronicled his famous family in *Charmed Lives*, a memoir of his father and uncles—talented and ambitious Hungarian Jewish immigrants who dominated the British film industry in the years before and after World War II. Here he briefly describes his privileged upbringing in his parents' cosmopolitan circle. Family friends included Marc Chagall, the sculptor Jacob Epstein, and Graham Greene, who introduced young "Miki" to martinis and the brothels of the Côte d'Azur.

Korda was schooled in Switzerland and studied history at Magdalen College, Oxford. He rode horses from an early age, enjoyed shooting and hunting, spoke fluent French and Russian, vacationed aboard his uncle's yacht at Cap d'Antibes, and hung around the sets of classic films like *The Third Man* and *The Four Feathers*. After a boyish jaunt to Budapest in 1956 to lend a hand in the Hungarian Revolution, he came to New York where he landed an entry-level job at Simon & Schuster.

S&S would later be built by CEO Richard E. Snyder—regarded by many as the Darth Vader of American publishing—into a $5 billion conglomerate. But in the days of Korda's editorial apprenticeship it was run like a family business by founding partners Richard Simon and Max Schuster. Korda's portrait of the old S&S, with its cast of Dickensian characters, recaptures an era of lost innocence in publishing.

The bulk of *Another Life* offers genial portraits of Korda's more notable colleagues and authors, intercut with scenes from his own rise to fame and fortune as an editor and writer. Korda's list is an editor's (or should I say publicist's?) dream: Will and Ariel Durant, Harold Robbins, Irving Wallace, S. J. Perelman, Larry McMurtry, Jacqueline Susann, Jackie Collins, Carlos Castaneda, Joan Crawford, Graham Greene, and Tennessee Williams. He has also

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Korda and his colleagues (some of them) lived out the Harold Robbins corporate-playboy fantasy.

■

worked with political figures, including Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Jesse Jackson. His portraits are amusing and affectionate, managing to give an impression of tact and restraint while slyly exposing his subjects to good-natured ridicule.

A generation is passing in American publishing and Korda is in many ways its leading representative. It is a generation that rose to unprecedented wealth and power on the postwar expansion of the mass market and the wave of corporatization that transformed publishing from an isolated backwater into a branch of the modern entertainment industry. Riding the crest of this wave, Korda and his colleagues (some of them anyway) lived out the Harold Robbins corporate-playboy fantasy, strutting around in red suspenders, talking tough and making million-dollar deals, taking chauffeured cars to fashionable expense-account lunches, and preying on female assistants.

Concurrent with these developments (though apparently less evident to Korda) is the weakening of moral and esthetic taste in publishing. Perhaps the

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most intriguing aspect of his book is the cultural history he recounts, wherein the revolution of the young that began in the 1950s against the constraints on frank speech and sexuality proceeded to break barrier after barrier until reticence and modesty were no longer thinkable. This ineluctable trajectory led Korda himself from freewheeling sex in the '50s and radical politics in the '60s to books by mafiosi and celebrity murderers in the '70s and '80s. While he might like to draw the line at (for example) Louis Farrakhan, he offers no principled objection to publishing a racist demagogue beyond that of personal taste. But in an age when publishers vie to prove how tasteless and unshockable they are, this resistance seems inadequate and comes about 30 years late.

You may have heard that if you place a frog in water on the stove and turn the heat up very slowly, it will feel no change in temperature, and sit there while the water starts to boil. In like manner, the devaluation of publishing has never seemed to upset Korda unduly. While others in the industry decry each little innovation as though the sky were going to fall, Korda keeps his equanimity and wonders what the fuss is all about, maintaining that sunny optimism which he rightly describes as the essence of editing. "Feels okay to me," thinks Korda as he slowly boils to death.

Yet despite having midwifed a nihilistic revolution in mass culture whose extreme manifestations even he finds repugnant, Korda himself always published what he cheerfully calls "*good* bad books"—a distinction sadly lost on corporate publishers for whom the only difference is that "good" books sell a lot of copies while "bad" ones do not.

Korda, in short, is best seen as a transitional type—the Editorial Playboy, a figure who appears briefly between the old-fashioned gentleman editor and the grim corporate survivalist of today. As such, he deserves to have a statue in Times Square: Picture Korda in his riding cap and jodhpurs (with the keys to his Porsche dangling out of his high shiny boot), grasping a sheaf of manuscript, striding down the hall with the gleam in his eye of that divinely charged enthusiasm that he reminds us is the true lifeblood of publishing. **NR**

Southern Cross

FORREST McDONALD

A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South, by Eugene D. Genovese (Georgia, 176 pp., $24.95)

EUGENE GENOVESE has a firmer understanding of American slavery than any other living historian, and he has a rare capacity for conveying immense portions of that understanding in a minimum of words. It will therefore not surprise his admirers to learn that this superb little book of essays packs the weight of a lengthy tome.

Mr. McDonald, a professor of history at the University of Alabama, is writing a history of states' rights.

Unlike other scholars, Genovese is convinced that the mass of southerners felt no guilt concerning ownership of slaves, accepting it as a fact of life, as ubiquitous in history, and above all as sanctioned by the Bible. Many, however, agonized about their inability to behave toward their slaves in accordance with the standards of humanity described in Scripture, whether Abrahamic or Christian. Their concern was not, as one might suppose, physical abuse or exploitation; they thought that abuse was rare, and they genuinely believed that northern workers were more mercilessly exploited without the cradle-to-grave security of the plantation system.

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Genovese does not dismiss the slaveowners' plight, but cannot forgive their later institution of Jim Crow.

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Rather, the evils that southerners

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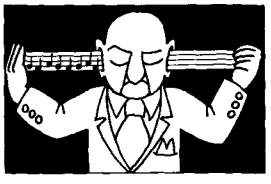
saw as inherent in American slavery were two. The first was a legal system that prohibited teaching slaves to read, which ran directly counter to the masters' pious Protestantism. The other was what sorely vexed northern readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: the destruction of families, the separation of husbands and wives and of parents and children by selling them "down the river."

Many slaveowners did, to be sure, ignore the law and educate their slaves. Moreover, during the 1850s a number of reform-minded slaveowners proposed laws placing slaves beyond seizure for debt, fixing slaves to the land regardless of their owners' fortunes, and giving legal recognition to the sanctity of slave families. But, as Genovese points out, efforts to enforce Biblical standards would necessarily have effected a social revolution. For example, legalizing and protecting slave marriages would have granted the right of contract to slaves and thereby destroyed the masters' patriarchical control. This they could not face, and many, fearing God's judgment of their stewardship, saw that judgment in the Civil War.

Genovese does not dismiss the slaveowners' plight—and it is a measure of his astuteness as a historian that, though abhorring slavery, he can see the institution from the owners' point of view—but he can muster no forgiveness for their instituting Jim Crow after emancipation. They had staunchly rejected as contrary to the Bible the Enlightenment's theory of polygenesis, the notion that blacks were a separate species, which some northern Democrats had embraced to justify supporting the party of slavery (Stephen A. Douglas: "I positively deny that the black man is my brother or any kin to me whatever").



Yet after Reconstruction, southern whites turned their backs on the Biblical teaching they had long espoused, embracing in its stead racist "mission to govern" doctrines that were just then spreading over the Western world. The result was to reduce freedmen to circumstances in some cases harsher even than they had known under slavery.

Genovese delivers his usual performance of erudition and heart. **NR**

■ MANNERS ■

Illustrated Men

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

THE German was heavily tattooed, a North Sea Queequeg, but it was when he pulled his trousers down that the crowd finally reacted—with gasps, squeals, nervous laughter. It was not that Theodor—*aus Hamburg*—was particularly well endowed, just that he was hung like a chandelier designed by Torquemada. There were chains, studs, odd metal piercings, distinguishing characteristics that even Bill Clinton couldn't deny.

Theodor's little striptease took place at the Second Annual New York City Tattoo Convention, three inky days in the Roseland Ballroom. Entering that gray, gloomy building you notice a plaque "In Honor of the Married Couples Who First Met Here," a list of names each with the date of that first happy encounter. What, I wondered, would the Lubes (from 1927) or even the Fortgangs (1961) have thought of Theodor?

They would have seen tattoos before. There have been professional tattooists in Manhattan for over 150 years. The Bowery's Sam O'Reilly invented the electric tattoo machine over a century ago. Its descendants were there at the Roseland, the sound of their needles like a swarm of wasps, their sting leaving not venom, but tiny dots of color.

Tattooing was a part of the rough carnival subculture that has long been an American staple, its vaudeville-era stars tattooists with names like "Painless Jack" Tryon, "Sailor George" Fosdick, and Lew "The Jew" Alberts. It may have been banned by God (Leviticus 19:28, since you ask), but in the United States tattooing was a small, half-licensed rebellion, a male-bonding process for tough guys, Marines, the boys in the fleet. Even England's George V, a navy veteran, wore one.

The designs reflected tough-guy tastes. Anchors, devils, sailing ships, boxing gloves, daggers, Old Glory, a pair of dice, and, of course, "Mother." Other gals on view might include a busty "Miss Liberty," a bare-breasted mermaid, or a Hawaiian maiden with only a ukulele for modesty.

This brand of macho chic lives on. You could hear it in the Led Zeppelin that thundered through the Roseland's speakers. You could taste it in the Ballroom's bar, where people were drinking Bud and (glorious vision!) smoking. You could see it on the forearms and

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The man with a tattooed face is walking graffiti, and we are the bland, blank wall.

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biceps of the bulky thirtysomethings in the crowd, burly dudes, all ponytails, denim, and tattoo.

But what was Theodor doing here? There was nothing very macho about him. He may have had an Iron Cross hanging from his nipple, but he was pretty weedy, not the sort of man that I'd want in my Wehrmacht. What he was, however, was an illustration of a society in evolution.

We tend to view cultural shifts in terms of some dramatic event: the arrival, say, of Marcel Duchamp at the Armory Show, or Elvis at Sun Records. But history isn't really like that. The greatest changes are, like Theodor's body, marked in countless tiny, mostly unpredictable ways.

And so the endless, tedious campaign against Western values has resulted not in their defeat in some watershed event, but in their gradual transformation, a transformation achieved by innumerable microscopic reevaluations of our culture. Even tattoos have now been reinterpreted. To be sure, there are many for whom a spot of ink is nothing more than what it always was: a bit of fun or, these days, a fashionably naughty gesture. We all know the type, the college girl with a flower above the ankle, the

Mr. Stuttaford is a writer based in New York.

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investment banker with enigmatic Chinese calligraphy on his shoulder. According to one estimate, 20 million Americans have been tattooed. But for another, smaller, more self-important crowd, the tattoo means something else. It is part of an imagined "tribal renaissance," an attempt to tap into the (allegedly) superior authenticity of those primitive folk who never left the squalor of the rain forest, mud hut, or atoll.

The problem is that these original noble savages were really just people with too much time on their hands and too few toys. They played with what they had, and what they had was their bodies. Consequently they didn't just tattoo. They pierced, they stretched, they cut, and they scarred.

And so, argue neo-tribalists, should we. At the Roseland, one man posed for gawkers by the door, his bald head a riot of color, his nose, in a nod to headhunter cool, pierced by a bone.

Others milled around inside, the sort of people, I suspected, unable to get through airport metal detectors without drama. Cheek rings glinting in the fluorescent light, these modern primitives searched for specialized merchandise tables, eyeing the latest in septum tusks and nostril screws from Pleasurable Piercings. If you're thinking this sounds more S & M than Samoa, you're probably right. This is not an authenticity that has to be accurate. It just has to annoy, alarm, or provoke. And so tattoos are also creeping across the body, far beyond the point where they can be concealed by a rolled-down sleeve or a buttoned shirt. That would imply discretion, the opposite of this definition of authenticity. The man with a tattooed face is walking graffiti, and we, hopeless conformists, are the bland, blank wall.

Or so he would like to believe. In fact, he's rebelling against an authority that exists only in his imagination. He's messed himself up for nothing. This illustrated man may be a primitive, yes, but only in the sense that he hasn't kept up with the times. In reality, as he fails to understand, nobody really cares what he does to himself. He'll regret it one day. He should get over it.

Oh, that's right. He can't. They don't come off. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Kind of Famous

RICHARD BROOKHISER

Of all the parsings of Andy Warhol's prediction that everyone would be famous for 15 minutes, I have never seen the most obvious: Warhol was a New Yorker when he said it. In a city where a grass lawn of one's own is available only to multimillionaires in penthouses, fame is astonishingly cheap.

The city produces three degrees of fame. First come the actually famous: people who do something well and whose careers are followed by millions of other people. Speaking of Warhol, the only time I saw him in the desiccated flesh was buying lettuce at my neighborhood farmers' market. We may have to send to Pennsylvania for vegetables, but we cultivate avant-garde self-promoters right here.

The doings of the actually famous are chronicled by the local media, especially its six newspapers (three dailies, three weeklies). But because the actually famous are not numerous enough to fill the column inches, the media augment their ranks with the spuriously famous: people thrust into prominence to keep the gawkfest going. Many of these are morally and aesthetically as sightly as car wrecks, and they deserve as much credit for their notoriety as a skunk does for becoming road kill. The gold standard of spurious fame was set by Amy Fisher and the Buttafuocos. Now these urban Jukes and Kallikaks share space in the public mind with Henry Kissinger and Spike Lee (who, come to think of it, share space with each other). In Heaven, we

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is author most recently of *Alexander Hamilton, American.*

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are promised, there are many mansions. In tabloid Heaven there is only one.

There is a third category—kind of famous, the people who, when you see them, you think, *Don't I know . . .* When you see them on the fly—descending an escalator, sliding into a car—you usually can't answer the question until after they are gone.

Some of the kind of famous are hoping to become actually famous. They are summer interns of celebrity. For some months the coffeehouse a block from where I live has had a pleasant kid behind the counter. He has dyed platinum-blond hair, and a small stud in his eyebrow—nothing unusual. Then one day the *Times* showed him in a still from a movie that had done well at Sundance and was playing in the Village. When I complimented him, he enjoyed the attention, but as far as he was concerned that was the last job, and hence as current as the Cuban missile crisis; now he was focused on the next, which was disobligingly elusive. Was he reversing the Hollywood curve of working in the soda shop and being discovered?

Strangers in life, Joe Klein and I have entered some video Mount Rushmore of the mind.

I watched one acquaintance burst from the chrysalis of kind of fame. I know her because her children play in the local park; also because she was an anchor on MSNBC when I was a talking head there. Then she lost two letters and moved to NBC. I ran into her one afternoon. It was too early to be fancy, but she was in a cocktail dress and high anxiety: *People* had named her one of the 50 most beautiful people in America, and she was on her way to pose for the photos that would illustrate their judgment. When she's not working or fretting she gets coffee at the shop where the actor works. Maybe her slip stream can give him a boost.

Other kind of famous people get that way by doing things that are done in every town in America—pestering the school board, complaining about the police. But when the town is larger than half the member nations of the U.N., purely local eminence takes on a new dimension. I enjoyed a kind of fame for a few years when I was a pundit on the Sunday-morning talk show of the CBS affiliate. For the first half hour the show's hosts grilled the guest; for the second, three reporters reviewed the guest's performance and talked about other news of the week. Soon I noticed that I was being noticed. Usually it was a quick passerby's hello. Once a cabbie who had driven and taken his fare in silence, disconcertingly said, "Have a nice day, Rick," as I got out. Rarely did anyone disagree with me—a strange complacence, I thought, to be shown a conservative pundit in a liberal town, until I realized that people simply enjoyed recognizing a familiar face.

The gig ended, but the kind of fame persisted, and even mutated. Now I notice that people tell me how much they used to enjoy my head-to-head clashes with Joe Klein. (Before Klein became "Anonymous," and hence actually famous, he was a political columnist for *New York* magazine and a pundit on the show.) I smile and nod reminiscently. But the funny thing about our clashes is that Klein and I never appeared together. His gig ended before mine began. Strangers in life, we have entered some video Mount Rushmore of the mind.

Verité ending: This column was written on a flight into LaGuardia airport. As I was taking my carry-ons out of the overhead, another returning New Yorker asked my wife, behind my back, "Isn't he an actor?" I was—kind of. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Not with a Bang . . .

JOHN SIMON

If previous ages tended blindly to ignore their geniuses, ours is all too ready to crown as genius the nearest trendy hack. One of the very few masters not fully acknowledged even posthumously is the Viennese playwright-fiction writer Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), most of whose many works are poorly, if at all, translated into English.

Hence it may be unsurprising if, for his last movie, ***Eyes Wide Shut***, Stanley Kubrick, along with his co-scenarist, Frederic Raphael, misread the work it was "inspired by," Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* (*Dream Story*, 1926). That the director died four days after completing the film, and before putting in his usual last-minute finishing touches, makes the result even more damaging.

In the novella, Fridolin and Albertine are a young couple with a small daughter: he, a successful physician; she, a somewhat bored housewife; both basically happy. At a ball, he briefly flirts with a pair of masked girls; she dances with a stranger, charmed until a lewd remark shocks her. At home, the spouses are more amorous than ever, but then, out of a slight jealousy, confess that, on a long-ago shared holiday in Denmark, she was attracted to a young officer at the next table, he to a glimpsed 15-year-old girl bathing naked on a deserted beach. Each of them felt briefly but intensely tempted.

A midnight call summons Fridolin to the bedside of a patient, who is dead by the time he gets there. The dead man's daughter, Marianne, though engaged to another, suddenly confesses an overwhelming passion for Fridolin: Politely but hastily, he escapes. Not ready to go home, he follows a very young, rather touching prostitute to her digs, but the encounter ends platonically.

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ly.

At a seedy café, he runs into Nachtigall, formerly a fellow medical student but now a somewhat shabby pianist. It emerges that tonight he will again play piano for a group of orgiasts who meet in different houses. Transported by a taciturn coachman, he will, as usual, play blindfolded, though he has noticed masked men dancing with comely nude women, then having sex

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Clever showman that he was, Stanley Kubrick pulled off the ultimate trick.

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with them. Fridolin extracts the password from his friend, then, under bizarre circumstances I can't go into here, acquires a monk's costume and follows Nachtigall to the orgy in an inconspicuous house on a small suburban street.

Strange things happen. He is recognized as an interloper, and would come to harm, were it not for a nude but masked girl who had previously urged him to bolt; she declares her readiness to take his unspecified punishment upon herself. He is packed off to near his home. The next morning, Albertine tells him her dream, wherein she made love to that young Danish officer while looking on unconcerned as strange men whipped and crucified Fridolin.

He, even more strongly piqued, seeks vengeance in the form of a real-life tryst of his own. But Marianne now proves both unattractive and unavailable; the young prostitute, for whom he brings a package of much-needed victuals, is off in the hospital, gravely ill, as her roommate, another prostitute, informs him. Searching for the stranger who sacrificed herself for him, he is told at Nachtigall's hotel that the pianist was hustled off at dawn by two men to an unknown destination. With some difficulty, he tracks down the orgy house, only to be handed by a servant at the gate a letter addressed to him by name. He is to stop making further useless inquiries or suffer the dire consequences.

In a newspaper, he reads about a beautiful young countess who took poison and was brought to a hospital by two gruff men. At the hospital, he learns of her death, but a doctor friend lets him look at her nude cadaver at the morgue. Never having seen her unmasked, he can't be sure whether she is his savior, but the body excites him uncommonly. Back home, he is horrified to find his wife asleep next to his last night's mask, which he had failed to return to the costumer.

He confesses his escapade. Forgiving, she tells him they ought to be thankful for emerging unscathed from their adventures, both real and dreamed. Here, when he asks, "Are you sure?," the film mistranslates her answer as, "Just as sure as I am that the reality of one night, let alone that of a whole lifetime, is not the whole truth." Schnitzler ends the sentence: "and not even that of an entire human life represents its innermost truth." Then comes the movie's crowning vulgarity. Alice, as she is called in the film, tells her husband, Dr. Bill Harford, that there is one more thing they must promptly do. Asked what, she sassily declares, "F***." Blackout, end of film—and of any sympathy we could muster for Kubrick's swan song.

In the story, Schnitzler has the spouses, early on, talking gravely of "those hidden, barely sensed desires that can call forth dangerous eddies in the clearest and purest soul" and "the secret purlieus for which they had scant longing, but into which the winds of fate might yet, if only in a dream, someday sweep them." Schnitzler's tone is always subtle, poetic, and classically controlled. No explanation of the orgy and its consequences, who the dead woman was, and other, lesser mysteries. But both the real and dreamt adventures bespeak the dangers against which even a happy marriage must be on constant guard.

Kubrick, to do him justice, wanted to stick with the story, even though it was his disastrous idea to move the locale to present-day New York, which in mores and sensibility is not just a century but worlds removed from Schnitzler's Vienna. But, as we can gather from

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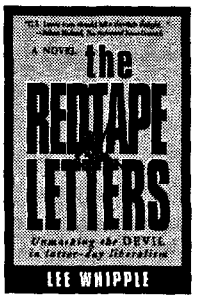

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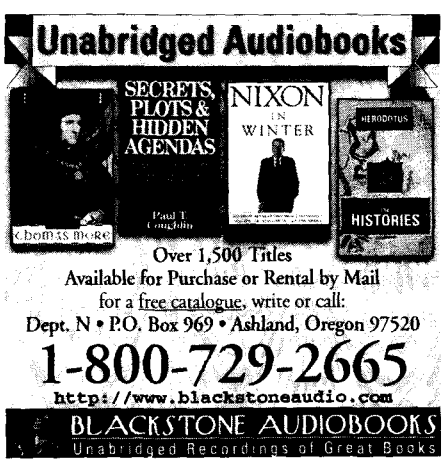
who insisted that moviegoers would not tolerate unresolved mystery and needed full explanations. So he invented an unlikely nabob, Victor Ziegler (played drably by Sydney Pollack), who gives the initial, huge Christmas party in his duplex at the Plaza. At that party, Victor, on the upper floor, was having sex with a call girl, Mandy, who overdosed; Bill, summoned upstairs, managed to resuscitate her. Near the film's end, Victor explains to Bill that he, too, was at that orgy where Bill was unmasked and recognized. Mandy was the young woman who "sacrificed" herself for him—a charade invented by Victor—and also the one who, having OD'd again, became the corpse at the morgue. Everything fits neatly and prosaically together—no profound unanswered questions here.

The screenplay's additions are crude and ugly. The pathetic young Vienna streetwalker becomes a ballsy Greenwich Village prostitute, and when Bill returns the next day with an unlikely box containing a cake, he lewdly sticks his hand into her roommate's cleavage, all but having sex with her. At Ziegler's party, Alice dances immodestly with a creepily suave Hungarian, who propositions her in a German accent. Nicole Kidman, a good actress, is made to play this and other scenes like a drunken nymphet. Tom Cruise, with many callow grins, is totally miscast as a doctor, whose midnight house call, by the way, is unimaginable in today's New York.

Kubrick, with characteristic grandiosity, turns the orgy into a Busby Berkeley extravaganza, with scores of participants in a spectacular Long Island mansion, the sort of thing that could not go undiscovered. But at least the film could have profited, had he been alive, from Warner Brothers' not bowdlerizing it clumsily: A girl fully naked in one shot wears a large, computer-generated G-string in the next.

Worse, though, Kubrick seems to have lost his sense of timing. Everything is slow-moving and protracted beyond endurance—much of it accompanied by three maddeningly repeated one-finger piano notes from the second movement of György Ligeti's *Musica Ricercata*—and there are enough deliberate gaps in the often stilted dialogue to supply a half-dozen Pinter and Mamet plays with pauses. Yet, clever showman that he was, Kubrick pulled off the ultimate trick: Nothing succeeds like a director's prompt demise upon completing his film. **NR**



■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

The Politics of Bad Faith: The Radical Assault on America's Future, by David Horowitz (Free Press, 214 pp., $25)

IDEAS really do have consequences. Take, for instance, "equality" and "social justice"—two vague, seemingly innocuous ideas that America, influenced by the Left, has attempted to turn into reality, with disastrous results. This engaging book explores the Left's dishonest efforts to deny the consequences of left-wing ideology. Nowhere is this fundamental dishonesty—which Horowitz terms "bad faith"—more evident than when leftist thinkers try to explain the outcome of the struggle between capitalism and socialism. Horowitz dissects, for example, the radical historian Eric Hobsbawm. In his celebrated book *The Age of Extremes*, Hobsbawm argues that a "true" socialist revolution has never been given a fair trial in an industrial nation, and therefore socialism can't be judged a failure. But as Horowitz points out, East Germany was just such a nation when revolution struck. Horowitz proceeds to debunk the work of such postmodern academics as Catherine MacKinnon, Richard Rorty, and Cornel West. He asks: "Was it mere accident that relativism and its twin, nihilism, should become outlooks of the Left at the precise moment that its ideas were being refuted by historical events?" Relativism was the perfect cover under which the Left could evade "the truth of a history that has punctured its utopian illusion." But perhaps, you say, all this bad faith amounts to nothing more than hazy philosophizing, limited in its impact to the cloistered setting of the ivory tower. No, it is much more dangerous than that. Horowitz shows its influence in current battles over family issues, affirmative action, and AIDS prevention. As the Left takes its postmodern turn, ex-radical Horowitz is right there keeping an eye on them, and demonstrating his own unique value to the Right. —MATTHEW CAROLAN

The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America, by Lee Edwards (Free Press, 391 pp., $27.50)

ALTHOUGH a quick glance at the face of Bill Clinton's America might not show it, the conservative movement has triumphed. At least that's the thesis of Lee Edwards's new book, which he bases on the happy outcome of the Cold War and the public's rejection of big government. Thus, he argues, the 1994 Republican recapture of the House of Representatives was "the most dramatic manifestation of a conservative revolution in American politics that had been going on for 50 years." Edwards focuses on four key figures—Robert A. Taft, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Newt Gingrich — and constructs a stirring story seldom told by modern historians, though one might argue that he does not give proper credit to the intellectual side of the movement. What really makes the book interesting, though, is Edwards's nostalgic descriptions of the galvanizing political struggles of the past and his portraits of the larger-than-life characters, American heroes even, who redefined conservatism and changed the face of American politics. Edwards may be premature in declaring a conservative victory, but as history this book will certainly do until the real victory comes along. —BROOKE NORMAN

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Court Refranchises the States

NEW YORK, JUNE 25

THE first thing to tell yourself today, even though you told it to yourself a week ago and a month ago and a decade ago, is that a) it isn't always easy to figure out how the Founders would have interpreted their own Constitution in the modern world, and b) even if the constitutional language screams out at you in bold-faced type its meaning, there is nothing to do about it if five members of the Supreme Court say that some other meaning is really implied.

Consider the current turmoil, with the slim (five-justice) majority of the Court looking afresh at the Eleventh Amendment, what seems a baptismal celebration of rediscovered political balances of power.

Begin concretely, with attention to one of the plaintiffs.

Congress has passed a Fair Labor Standards Act. Under its auspices, Congress declares what is the minimum wage that can be paid in any transaction to which the government is a party.

In 1974, Congress says: Yes, and we extend that minimum wage to any transaction to which *state* governments are a party.

In 1976, the Supreme Court steps in and says (again, by a slim majority): No—you can't do that, because the individual states are in such matters sovereign. In 1985, the Court reverses itself. On that occasion a shot was fired across the Court's bow by the star-spangled William Rehnquist, who vowed a comeback, and got it last week.

Now this is the kind of thing that was going on through all this. In 1992, 65 state probation officers and juvenile caseworkers in Maine sued the state of Maine for refusing to give them premium pay for overtime (as specified in the Fair Labor Standards Act). Even as the lawsuit was being pressed, the Supreme Court was heard again (1996) to the effect that Congress didn't have the authority to force states to defend themselves in federal courts under laws enacted under Article I of the Constitution, which gives Congress the right to regulate interstate commerce.

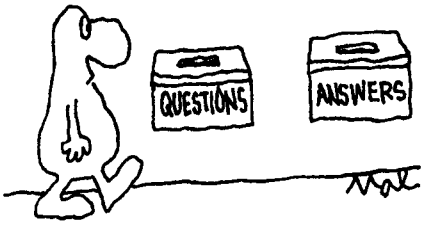
But Congress, undeterred, reasserted the right of citizens to sue in federal court to enforce state compliance with the wage laws. But once again the state probation officers were frustrated, when the Maine Supreme Court, ruling that the state had sovereign immunity in its own courts similar to its Eleventh Amendment immunity in federal court, dismissed the suit.

What does the Eleventh Amendment say? It says that "The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State." In 20th century idiomatic prose as applicable to the current situation, that says: A state can't be sued because of its failure to enforce federal laws governing matters that are none of its business.

Well, how do you establish whether a law is properly a part of the federal government's business? You refer (the majority are saying) to the Tenth Amendment. What does *it* say? "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Now we are not talking about basic rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. That argument was settled by the so-called incorporation doctrine, which in 1925 ruled that any "right" of any citizen guaranteed as such by the Constitution has to be enforced everywhere. The question before the Court last week had to do with the survival of states' rights in areas in which the federal government seeks to interpose its own ideas of what should and what should not be—like the minimum wage for state employees.

The new statists are dizzy with concern over the consequences of this recapture of the Tenth and Eleventh Amendments, wondering whether it will infect the whole welfarist edifice. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the equivalent of a historical textbook asserting the views of the majority are reintroducing us to traditional ideas of what you can and can't do when you want to argue with the sovereign. For the dissent, Justice David Souter sounded like Paul Revere, banging the tocsin for the subordination of state governments, riding backwards.



In an extempore remark, Justice Antonin Scalia, the aphorist of the Court, dashed off a comment on the dissenting opinion of Justice Stephen Breyer. "Justice Breyer reiterates (but only in outline form, thankfully) the now fashionable revisionist accounts of the Eleventh Amendment set forth in other opinions in a degree of repetitive detail that has despoiled our Northern woods."

It's wonderful to be alive when such sentences are written.

Compassionate Conservatism at Bay

NEW YORK, JUNE 22

THE ongoing linguistic turmoil is over the term "compassionate conservatism." CC has taken hold as the designation chosen by Gov. George W. Bush to characterize his campaign and, if elected, his tenure as president. FDR chose New Deal, Truman, Fair Deal, neither of which word-assemblies told us very much; but compassionate conservatism seeks to make moral and political points. Gov. Bush has stuck by the formulation and told Americans, in his Iowa declaration two weeks ago, that he would be guided by the lights of the concept.

Two voices have shed light on the idea of compassionate conservatism. We had in the *New York Times* on June 20 an inquisitive and instructive essay by Adam Nagourney. Back in February, the idea of the conjunction of terms was scathingly explored by John O'Sullivan in NATIONAL REVIEW. It isn't only Bush who does it. "When Bill Clinton feels our pain," wrote O'Sullivan, "his real emotion is mild self-satisfaction at his own sensitivity. This is hardly surprising. No painful or expensive effort is personally expected from those who feel compassion stir in their breast."

Mr. O'Sullivan's point is shrewd psychological mockery. "I am a patriotic American" suggests that I am to be distinguished from the other Americans, who are not patriotic. Compassionate conservatism seeks to define—to refine, in the current instance—mere conservatism, which, it is implied, is unbuoyed by mitigating concerns for conservatism's victims. "If George Bush talks more about teaching reading rather than abolishing the

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Department of Education, that's the language of compassionate conservatism." That remark, quoted by Nagourney, is by Nelson Warfield, the press secretary to Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign.

We begin to hit analytical pay dirt. And O'Sullivan digs deep. "Interestingly, the practical example most commonly cited of George the Second's 'compassionate conservatism' falls with almost eerie precision into this category"—of social policies that encourage illegitimacy, foster crime, and increase poverty—"namely, his support for bilingual education. Trumpeted as a sign of his sensitivity to Hispanic concerns, it will in fact hold back Hispanic children in the economy and prolong the poverty of Hispanic families."

There are, at the outset, difficulties in merely applying the concept. How does CC face the question of gun control? Abortion? Foreign policy? Nagourney quotes Ralph Reed, former head of the Christian Coalition. Mr. Bush, Reed observes, has decided that the only thing he needs is to "put a smiling face on conservatism again"—and leave it to others to figure out precisely what he means.

But conservatism is achievement-oriented. The soft underbelly of compassionate conservatism was explored by Charles Murray in his memorable book on welfare (*Losing Ground*) and the mischief that welfare has effected. What favor do we confer on the student who, even though he has no learning disability, refuses to learn to read? Seventy percent of American homeless are drug addicts or alcoholics. Do we really help them with comprehensive shelter? Why are we so determined to "understand" those whose behavior is anti-social, whether sowing disruptions in classrooms or seeds of life in lackadaisical engagements, however passionate? "A good society," I intoned two years ago at a conservative conference, "needs to be hospitable to virtue, which is the easy part; but shouldn't it also be inhospitable to dereliction?"

On that occasion, as the luncheon speaker, I directed attention to illegitimacy, the single greatest problem in America, and the demoralizing effect of flippant marriages. "Elizabeth Taylor has dispensed with her eighth husband. We would have no reason to be surprised if tomorrow she married her ninth. Or to be surprised if that union were treated other than as one more glamorous event. Photographers from *People* magazine, floating down in parachutes to capture the moment. If imitation is the highest form of flattery, might it be said that though Miss Taylor has had only eight husbands, she has given birth to millions of children?"

Gov. Bush has to be careful not to lose himself in the caresses of compassion, redirecting, and transforming, conservatism. Mr. O'Sullivan traces the interventionist impulse of the compassionate public figure. George Bush the First visited the recession-hit state of New Hampshire during a campaign and said, "I care." George the Second has given us compassionate conservatism. Mr. O'Sullivan concludes: "I suppose that another George will come along in due course—which is alarming because, by my calculations, the next one loses America altogether."

Go, Feingold, Go!

NEW YORK, JUNE 18

I THINK Sen. Russell Feingold has a capital idea. He says he will cite relevant financial donations made to individual senators when they argue for this or the other piece of legislation.

Sen. Feingold, along with Sen. John McCain, were out on a limb during this legislative season, backing a campaign-finance reform law that sought to eliminate soft-money escape routes used by business and labor to beat the formal rules against maximum political donations. Their bill failed, and did so for pretty good reasons. There isn't any way you can keep interested bodies from backing political candidates. It's like wage-and-price controls. The money slithers about and reaches the candidate you want to help. The only way out, if you are trying to checkmate all possible moves by voting interests is to repeal the First Amendment, which isn't going to happen.

The free-market people (this writer included) have all along said that the way to go is to lift all limits on individual political contributions *but* to give instant public notice of these donations—to the Internet within 24 hours that John H. Yahoo yesterday gave $100,000 to Sen. Ecksyte. That way everybody, including the voters, is there to notice incipient hanky-panky. The opponent of Sen. Ecksyte is at liberty to ask, in public debate, just what is it that Mr. Yahoo wants Ecksyte to do for Yahoo, when he goes back to the Senate after reelection.

Now it is a mistake to assume that a contribution to an officeholder or a candidate is always done with strings attached. That is not necessarily the case. The National Rifle Association gives out money as diffusely as Santa Claus, though with special sweetmeats for legislators who have, in the past, stressed the joys of gun ownership. Prof. Milton Friedman's most widely read essay was a rebuke to corporations that make grants to charitable enterprises. His reasoning is that it is the stockholders, not management, who should decide which philanthropies to favor: Let the corporations increase the annual dividend and the stockholders decide whether to give the money to the opera company or the Red Cross.

Prof. Friedman sharply rejects the idea that the corporation is disinterestedly giving out gifts: a) The corporation is obviously seeking general public favor; and b) it is using other people's money in doing so. The National Rifle Association is not giving money to Sen. Ecksyte because it loves the color of Ecksyte's beautiful blue eyes. It wishes to encourage certain senators because it has reason to believe that they have the correct attitude towards gun ownership. Or because it anticipates a vote soon ahead in which the interests of gun manufacturers are on the line.

A related idea comes up from time to time from the vice fuzz, namely to give out the names of the johns who are caught patronizing the ladies of the night. Now and then, here and there, that seems to happen, as with the actor Hugh Grant a few years ago, practicing what he does in the movies, in real life. The planted axiom by the vice people is that patrons of the prostitutes are truly frightened of public exposure, and perhaps even marginally so, to the point of giving up their illegal practices rather than risk detection. Legislators who accept money aren't necessarily engaged in prostitution, but they fear the smell of the trade, which is why Sen. Feingold's proposal is not likely to be voted in by acclamation.

On the other hand, why need it be? If the senator simply got up during one of those debates and said to Sen. Ecksyte: You received twenty grand from the NRA and now you're voting against gun reform—what's to keep him from saying that?

Might the Senate establishment meet and revise its protocols? There are certain things a senator is not permitted to say about another senator—you cannot, for instance, question his patriotism on the floor. Will the rules committee of the Senate try to outlaw references to gifts made to individual senators when they relate to legislation being considered?

That is one way to block Feingold, one guesses. But there are certain risks in going to such lengths. Feingold has truly come up with something, just this side of harnessing a lie detector to a legislator, which would make him look red on television screens if he were taking liberties with what he truly thought.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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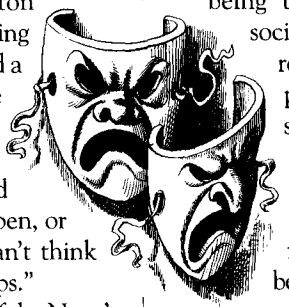
▪ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ▪

FLORENCE KING

IT must be nice to be one of those big-gun columnists with a research staff to gather notes for you. How painless, said she longingly, to have the day's news clips put in front of you, already marked and summarized by hired minions who are easily replaced when their minds snap from direct contact with the morning papers. This way the columnist has the news broken gently to him, enabling him to ease gradually into a temperate reaction to the day's big story.

Contrast it with my way: staggering up when I hear the Washington papers hit the door and juggling a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a red Scripto over a front-page story about the Navy's plan to put women on submarines. This is why you will never find George Will trying to light a pen, or Anna Quindlen writing "I can't think of a worse place to have cramps."



The proposed destruction of the Navy's last all-male haven promises to hew to the familiar three-pronged pattern established by feminist assaults on the military:

1) A crazy idea is put forth.
2) Elaine Donnelly objects to it.
3) It happens anyway.

The coed-submarine idea was put forth by Navy secretary Richard Danzig, an incomparable prose stylist like all of the Clinton cabinet, who said: "The most Narcissus-like thing about creating something in your own image, about being in love with your own image, is the continued and continuous existence of this segment of the Navy as a white-male preserve." Read that at 5 A.M. and it becomes a multicultural minute celebrating Moby Dick as a Greek myth.

Not that Danzig was advocating affirmative action—perish the thought. He was merely pointing out, he said, that when a democracy changes, so must its military. Otherwise, "if the submarine force remains a white-male bastion it will wind up getting less and less support when it requires resources, when it has troubles, be they accidents or personnel issues or other kinds of things."

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As the not-so-subtle threat of uncooperative white men being left to drown lingered in the air, Danzig's spokesman popped up with what the Pentagon calls a clarifying statement. There were no plans for coed subs in the "near future," he said; the secretary merely wanted to prompt submariners to start thinking about "future changes."

The table was now set for Elaine Donnelly, the longsuffering head of the Center for Military Readiness, who objected on cue: "The submarine force is being targeted for really harmful social change for no particular reason. It is clear what is happening here is happening in stages."

As usual, she was right; this summer 144 women officers on orientation tours will remain aboard subs instead of being returned to shore at the end of the day. The phrasemakers at the Pentagon claimed this was "not inconsistent with the policy of not assigning women to submarines," a statement not unlike the examples given by George Orwell in his essay on the politics of obfuscation, but one not without value since it gave the *Washington Times* a golden opportunity to untie the nots in their headline: WOMEN TO SPEND NIGHTS ON SUBS.

This is how it starts. The next step will be congressional hearings featuring so-called "enraged conservatives" who will, as usual, swallow their rage and make their classic mistake of adopting the enemy's language, delivering fervent opening statements on why "women have a place in our military" and heartfelt testimonials to "our fighting men and women." Not to be outdone in the art of standing up and caving in, populist conservatives will protest that only "elite" career-path women officers stand to benefit from coed subs while enlisted swabettes will bear the brunt of the hardships. To prove it, John Kasich will announce yet again that his father was a mailman.

Meanwhile, crusty old salts will try desperately not to sound crusty, old, or salty as they counter feminist claims that mashing your boobs against a man in a narrow passageway is no big deal. The mention of space is fatal, bringing on an army, so to speak, of measurers to explain how to convert a 30-foot-wide tube into an oasis of privacy.

A Navy briefing document on this problem already exists. Outfitting coed subs "will require removal of operational equipment reducing war-fighting effectiveness." So be it. Why worry about war-fighting when you have already converted the entire military to peacekeeping? Take out the torpedoes to make room for individual shower stalls. Operational equipment? On coed subs? Don't be silly. Get rid of the periscope. Who needs one when you've got female intuition aboard? "I have a feeling something is up there . . . "

THIS, discounting my punch-drunk exaggerations, is how it will end. At the moment we are at the same stage we were in back when everyone was saying, "They'll never put women in fighter planes." I give yellow-bellied, polka-dot submarine warfare about three years to become fully operational, which is to say, capable of being sunk by the *Lusitania* traveling at ramming speed.

If we put women on submarines, history will record it as the time we defied human nature once too often. If feminists think Tailhook and Aberdeen were bad, wait till they see what happens underwater. For a preview they can watch a German movie called *Das Boot* and substitute a coed crew for the all-male one. This has to be the most tension-racked movie ever made, unbearable to watch yet so masterfully plotted it's impossible not to. Without a single recourse to tedious exposition, we are made aware of the loathing that builds up between people as mutual disgust exposes neuroses they never even knew they had.

It's not a matter of claustrophobia. Claustrophobics weed themselves out of the submarine service by not volunteering for it. The danger lies in the feral instinct to lunge at people we can't get away from, and for men in today's military that means women. So far they have submitted, but if we seal up the sexes and submerge them, we may wish we had heeded Dryden's warning: "How ill my fear they by my mercy scan/Beware the fury of a patient man." **NR**

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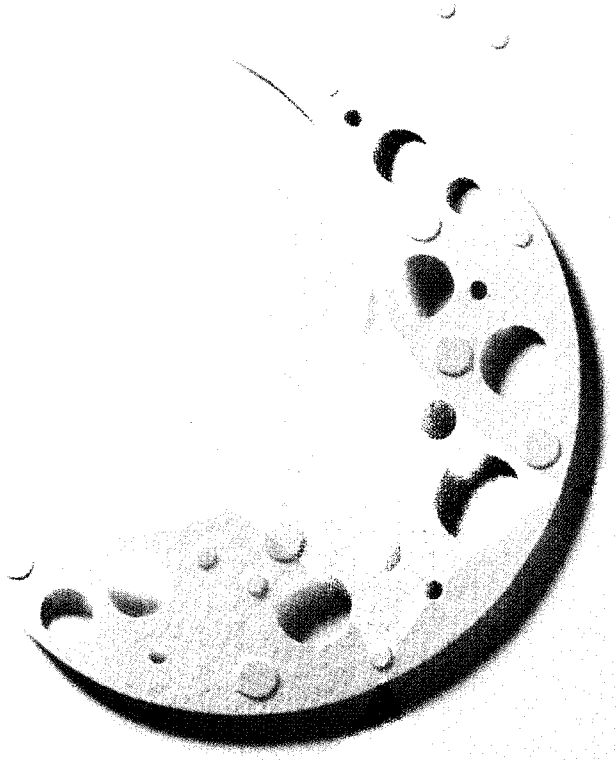

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